

Autism Connections Fredericton

Annual General Meeting

**Fiscal Years
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021**

Date: January 17, 2022

Location: By Zoom

1. Call to order: 7:02 pm.
2. Proof of Quorum: 31 in attendance – (Quorum is 24.)
3. Approval of Minutes of November 25th, 2020: *Motion to approve the minutes of November 25, 2020. Moved by Greg Forsythe, and seconded by Trish Fournier Hoyt. Carried.*
4. Approval of Agenda:

The following changes were made to the agenda:

New Business was numbered #9

Appointment of Barbara D'Entremont as Chair was numbered # 1.

Motion to approve the agenda as changed: Moved by Kim MacKeigan, and approved by Samantha Landry Carried.

5. Chair's Report & questions from the floor: Paul McDonnell

Paul stated that the pandemic of Covid-19 has complicated our operations and created challenges for families with children on the spectrum, as well as adults on the spectrum. ACF tries to fill the niches not covered by government services and asked that anyone in need of our services get in touch with us.

Paul thanked the Board for their contribution during his time serving as Chair, and spoke of his appreciation for their dedication, hard work, and going above and beyond.

Paul paid homage to Rick Hutchins for his outstanding work and service during his tenure as Executive Director of Autism Connections Fredericton over the last 5 years. Rick retired from his post in the fall of 2021. The centre has seen a tremendous growth thanks to his efforts and vision. He was also instrumental in creating numerous partnerships with various groups, which have allowed us to provide so much more to our membership and proved to be a win-win for all involved.

Our new Executive Director is Shannon O'Brien. She has been involved with ACF in a variety of capacities since 2017. She became our new Executive Director on

Oct 4th, 2021. Shannon has a degree in psychology with a certificate in Applied Behaviour Analysis from the University of New Brunswick. For the past year she was our Employment Counsellor, working with autistic adults across the province to help them obtain and retain gainful employment. Prior to returning to Autism Connections, Shannon held a position as a behaviour specialist with First Nations operated schools in First Nations communities on the north shore.

She previously owned and operated a family business and is well versed in the process of running an organization. She possesses strong skills in leadership, communication, public relations, marketing, and even construction. She brings the same type of energy that we saw in Rick, and is already developing exciting new plans for ACF.

There have been a few changes to the board. Amberee Hardy has resigned and moved away. Paul has completed two three-year terms as Chair of the Board (6 years total), which is the maximum set in our by-laws, and Barbara D'Entremont has been elected as the new Chair. Barb has been a member of the Board of Directors since 2015. She's a professor in the Psychology Dept. at UNB and teaches courses in child development and clinical psychology at both graduate and undergraduate levels. Her research has been focused on autism spectrum disorders as well as others. She's a licensed psychologist with over 20 years of experience, and also maintains a small practice.

Paul becomes the first person to hold the Past Chair position. The new executive is:

Barbara D'Entremont – Chair

Paul McDonnell – Past Chair

Kim MacKeigan - Vice Chair.

Trisha Fournier Hoyt – Treasurer

Ginette Hannan - Secretary

Members at large: Liz McDonnell; Greg Forsythe; Monique Lavigne; Judy McKinney; Michael Elliott; Katie LaCosta, and Samantha Landry.

For the past few years, we have been working on a strategic plan for ACF with four key areas: Programming; client services; succession planning and human resources, and revenue/expenses and overall finances, with a view of making ACF self-sufficient. The two main outcomes of the strategic plan are to secure and stabilizing funding for the centre, and to enhance our programs and services.

We haven't yet reached our goal of being self-sufficient, but we have done well with fundraising and providing services that bring in extra income.

All this has been accomplished with only one full-time employee (Executive Director), and one part-time bookkeeper (Barb Lockhart). The centre ideally needs an Office Manager and a Director of Programming.

We are very grateful to the various granting agencies that have supported us over the last two years, such as The Windsor Foundation, The Fredericton Community Foundation, the federal government Summer Job Program, and the N.B. Summer Employment program. We reported last year having received a grant from the Windsor Foundation in the amount of \$42,000. That grant will enable us to further develop our information services such as the Resource Guide and the library. Over the years we have also had significant help from the Fredericton Community Foundation. Most recently they financed Camp Marvel, our summer camp program. We have also received some funding from the New Brunswick Children's Fund for the camp.

In Addition to grants, we have two annual major fundraising events: the Superhero Fun Run/Walk, and the Spares & Strikes bowl-a-thon. These were both very successful. The goal for the Spares & Strikes this year was \$20,000 but we managed to raise \$31,000, which is the most we've ever raised. Thank you to all who have contributed to these events.

There were no questions asked.

Motion that the Chair's Report be accepted as presented:

Moved by Trish Fournier Hoyt, and seconded by Michael Elliott. Carried

6. Presentation of financial statement & questions from the floor

These financial statements were prepared by Walter Logue and cover the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021.

Trish pointed out that the biggest difference from prior years is the cash position which is a combination of deferred funds such as the provincial grant we received in advance of year end, the Windsor grant, and some UNB work/study funding that has not yet been spent, and the money raised at the Superhero Fun Run/Walk.

Revenues	\$295, 222
Expenditures	\$258,639
Excess of Revenues over expenditures	\$36,583
Net Assets at beginning of year	\$15,536
Net assets at end of year	\$52,119

We are in a healthy position.

Hiring Barb Lockhart as a part-time bookkeeper has been extremely beneficial. She is doing an excellent job. Having switched our bookkeeping to Quickbooks has made things a lot easier and more efficient. We are looking at adding automation of payments through online banking, such as for payroll and bill payment. We will also be looking at getting remote access for Shannon and Barb.

Questions for Trisha: Paul noted that our rent has always been a significant expense and that our lease will be up in the next year or so. We need to be thinking about whether we want to stay at 1666 Lincoln Road or find an alternate location.

Motion to approve the financial statement. Moved by Greg Forsythe and seconded by Sam Landry. Carried.

Motion to re-appoint Walter Logue, CPA, to prepare the financial statement to June 30, 2022. Moved by Judy McKinney and seconded by Kim McKeigan. Carried.

7. Executive Director's Report & questions from the floor

A lot has been going on at the Centre. ACF has been nominated and is one of three finalists for the Business Excellence Award for 2021. The winning recipient will be announced on February 16th.

Skills enrichment Program – In the fall we cemented a relationship with the Dept. of Social Development in which our Skills Enrichment Program has been recognized as a referable and fundable program. This will allow families and individuals to partake of our services without the financial burden. We have six UNB students working with us, serving 24 clients.

Adult Support Program – In the fall we introduced the online Employment Support Group. It was a partnership with Autism Nova Scotia, Ready Able & Willing. Unfortunately, this position wasn't sustainable, but it has given us the initiative to continue on a path where we will be submitting a proposal in 2022 to create a pilot program geared towards students at the high school level to help prepare them for post secondary living. This could be life skills, moving into the world of work, or going into post-secondary education.

We also hired a career counsellor for the Career Quest program.

Activities:

We had 4 participants in our gymnastics class and expect to host an additional 2 classes this year.

No Limits Soccer, for children ages 3 – 12, was successfully held again this year with approximately 40 participants.

Parent/Caregiver Support Group – This group that provides a safe, non-judgmental space for individuals to discuss the challenges and barriers of supporting someone on the spectrum had to be discontinued for the time being as it hasn't been as well attended virtually as it was in person.

Camp Marvel – This summer camp offers one-on-one support for children on the spectrum. We had 45+ campers during the six weeks of summer. It was a huge success.

Fundraisers – The Spares & Strikes event raised \$31,000, which exceeded our goal. The Superhero Fun Run/Walk was virtual again this year. It raised over \$10,000. We are looking forward to when we can hold it in person at Odell Park again.

Community Engagement – We had a Drive-by Santa again this year, but much more elaborate than last year. Thanks to Michael Elliott and his military connection, Santa arrived in an armoured vehicle amid a parade of military vehicles, police cars with flashing lights and a fire truck. The FHS ladies Black Kats hockey team sang carols, and approximately 100 children had a sensory friendly personal visit with Santa.

Vulnerable Persons Registry - ACF partnered with the Fredericton Police to create the Vulnerable Persons Registry, which would provide valuable information in cases where police would be responding to a call involving a registered person.

Student Initiatives – Some of the initiatives involving our students included a car wash, a yard sale and a bake sale.

Partnership – We are very fortunate to work with many groups in partnership including the following:

Autism Nova Scotia	Windsor Foundation
Working New Brunswick	Post Education Training & Labour
University of New Brunswick	United Way
St. Thomas University	NB Children's Foundation
5CDSB Gagetown	Canadian Tire Jump Start Charities
Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC)	Fredericton Community Foundation
Autism Intervention Services (AIS)	Canada Summer Jobs
OPAL Family Services	Student Employment Experience Dev.
Fredericton Playhouse	Working New Brunswick
Fredericton Transit	Fairstone Financial (Prospect Street)
Ready Willing and Able	
Fredericton Direct Charge Co-op Community Fund	

Goals for 2022

Membership Program - We will be rolling out a new membership program that will offer special promotions and preferred access to our programs and events.

Transition to Employment Pilot – A proposal to facilitate a program for students from grades 9-12 focused on developing post-secondary and life goals – expected to be delivered in September.

Touch-a Program – This will be a potential fundraiser in partnership with 5CDSB Gagetown and local first responders to provide a sensory friendly way for individuals to experience the different land, air, and sea vehicles within their community.

First Responder Training – Access funding to create an autism specific training for first responders.

Promotional Video – Creation of a promotional video highlighting the services and events Autism Connections provides to promote community awareness.

Home Alone Program – Adapt a curriculum that is autism specific to teach individuals the skills needed to succeed at being home alone.

Enrich Community Partnerships – Continue to work with community partners to provide education and awareness around autism, in support of the individuals and their families.

Shannon thanked the families who support our efforts and participate in our programs.

Motion to accept the Executive Director's report: Moved by Katie LaCosta and seconded by Ginette Hannan. Carried.

8. Board Appointments – Confirmation of existing board members and future nominations

There have been no new appointments since the last AGM.

Board Resignations – Paul McDonnell has resigned as Chair of the board. Amberee Hardy has resigned as a board member.

9. New Business – Changes to the By-laws

There are two motions. In the original by-laws, article 8.1.2 indicates the number of board members is limited to 5 executive members and 5 additional members for a total of 10. For the amount of work we need to accomplish, we need more than 10 members. The following changes were proposed and voted on. The key phrases are in italics and underlined.

Existing by-law states:

- 8.1.2 The Board of Directors is comprised of the following Officers - Chair, Past Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer – *and up to five (5) members at large.* The office of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by the same person.

Proposed changes:

- 8.1.2 *The Board of Directors is comprised of the following Officers - Chair, Past Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer –and as many members-at-large as is deemed necessary by the Board.The office of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by the same person.*

Motion to approve the changes to by-law 8.1.2 as proposed: Moved by Barb D'Entremont and seconded by Rick Hutchins. Carried.

The board was made aware that by-law 8.4.2 which states that directors shall serve a term of three (3) years is in conflict of *The Companies Act*. The board proposes the following:

Existing by-law:

- 8.4.2 *Directors shall serve for a term of three (3) years, or until their successors are elected and have assumed duties.*
- 8.4.3 No Officer or Director may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

Proposed change:

- 8.4.2 *Directors shall serve for a term of two (2) years, or until their successors are elected and have assumed duties.*
- 8.4.3 No Officer or Director may serve more than *three (3) consecutive* terms.

Motion to approve the changes to by-law 8.4.2 and 8.4.3 as proposed: Moved by Trish Fournier Hoyt and seconded by Greg Forsythe. Carried.

10. Appointments – Announcement of the election and appointment of Barbara D'Entremont as Chair of the Board of Directors.

Barbara thanked Paul and Rick for their hard work over the years. She thanked the board members and the membership, and praised them for their creativity in operating during the pandemic.

Motion to adjourn the meeting. Moved by Paul McDonnell.

Adjourned at 8:22 pm.

Ginette Hannan
Secretary