

Halifax and Region Military Family Resource Centre

2022-2023 Annual General Meeting

In Person MFRC Windsor Park
Monday June 26, 2023 @ 5:30pm p.m.

Board Attendance:

Larissa Page, Lisa Purdy, Amanda Lutz, Rhonda Gaudette, Ellen MacDonald, Hannah Hachey, Keely Anderson, Sarah Nixon-Miller, Jacquelyn Stevenson, Tracey McDonald, Troy Beazley, Shelley Hopkins, Lindsey Coshell

Call to Order: 5:30pm pm by Board Chair

Confirmation of Quorum: Yes, no less than 9 members of the board and proper notice was given as per bylaws. Confirmation of 10 board members attending, meeting will proceed.

Land Acknowledgement: The HRMFRC acknowledges that we in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people. This territory is covered by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship. We are all Treaty People.

Approval of Agenda: *Motion to approve the agenda, as presented.*

Request from the floor to add an agenda item for new and other business. Clarity sought on what business they wanted added: questions. Section added for questions, after appreciation for other Board Members.

Motioned by: 23 Second by: 31

Approved by 30
Abstained 1

MOTION CARRIED

Welcome and Introductions:

12 family members, 51% of Board, and 5 Chiefs. Base and wing as our partners. Motion acceptance, recording numbers and names.

Approval of Minutes: *Motion to approve the 2021-2022 AGM minutes as reviewed.*

Motioned by: 16 Second by: 17

Approved by 25

Abstained 1

MOTION CARRIED

Introduction of the Board head table; Advisor to the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Acting Secretary, Development & Evaluation Committee Chair, Governance Committee Chair and Board Chair.

4 additional family members and 1 Chief as Board members at large present.

Introduction of Executive Director.

MFRC Team representation: Director Learning Engagement & Evaluation, Finance Supervisor, and 2 Public Relations Coordinators.

Financial Presentations:

Aaron Wright and Patty Shaw, Baker Tilley

- Work with internal team of the MFRC including monthly reporting, preparation of year end financial statements, and assistance from the MFRC finance team including for this presentation, as well as engagement with the auditor.

Financial statements and position as presented by Aaron from Baker Tilley:

- Working with the team for last 4 years, as the external accounting firm.
- Provided an overview of the financial results.
- Auditors will present afterwards on their findings.
- H&R MFRC is a Registered Charity and Non-Profit, as such portion of the revenue is donation. Accounting policy are in compliance for non-for-profit standards.
- Budget tends to be around \$4Million, portions from Federally funding (MFS), CFB, 12 Wing, Child Care is parent fee contributions, and provincial funding.
- Windsor Park operating at a deficit, due to its Child Care Closure.
- Interest Rates were not budgeted for, but high interest rates leveraged more income.
- Expenses: ended year with a small surplus.
- Reserve funds from a CFB Halifax one time \$150K funding typically spent on capital items that aren't normally covered, used as a reserve to supplement costs. Only needed to use a small portion this year.
- Wages and benefits, lower expenses than projected, as some positions were not filled or replaced.

Statement of Financial Position:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Total Assets	\$2,083,744	\$2,264,362

Total Liabilities	\$1,303,409	\$1,467,770
Net Assets	\$880,892	\$855,370

Statement of Operations:

	Budget (unaudited)	2023	2022
Revenue	\$4,307,199	\$3,895,101	\$3,802,937
Expenses	\$4,269,853	\$3,869,579	\$3,763,472
Excess of Revenues Over Expenses	\$37,346	\$25,522	\$39,465

Cash Flow Statement:

Opening cash value	\$2,106,048
Net Decrease cash	\$ (922,645)
Ending Cash	\$1,183,403

Historical Data:

<i>Budget Year</i>	<i>Approved Bottom Line Core Operations & Childcare Centres</i>	<i>Actual</i>
23/24	\$9,056	TBD
22/23	\$(120,073)	\$293,738 (end of Dec)
21/22	\$(33,966)	\$38,889
20/21	\$(47,028)	\$6,035
19/20	\$(108,907)	\$38,683
18/19	\$(216,954)	\$(32,524)

Question: Inquiry regarding repairs and maintenance costs.

Answer: Investments in equipment and upgrades to Shearwater facility.

Question: Regarding legal expenses, what are they?

Answer: Legal \$3,521, and some PR expenses on top of that of \$10K, and additional costs in security \$17K, and 4 other smaller items, related to the closure of WPCC.

Question: What is Economic Dependence referring to; note 8 on the statements?

Answer: The organization is dependent on MFS for support and other larger organizations, such as provincial government.

Question: Why are the financial report copies provided, different from those presented on screen?

Answer: Copies provided are audited financial statements, what is being presented is part of the detailed financials.

Budget 2023-2024 presentation:

Budget Priorities

Budget has already been approved for 2023-2024 by the Board of Directors.

- Present a modest budget.
- Further simplify budget structure, reduced over time to 4 different budget categories.
- Aligned reporting with funding mandates.
- Sustainable compensation.
- MFS reporting requirements, now 2 MFRC budget categories. Aligns with MFS reporting so they see more information. Internal accounting systems and operations more closely align with MFS reporting requirements.
- 2022-2023 had 2 child care centers. 2023-2024 reduced to one.
- Balanced budget for Shearwater Children's Centre.
- A need to anticipate new Child Care provincial funding environment.
- Child Care is concerning, uncertain funding future.
- Budget priority was sustainable compensation, increase in wages and improved benefits. Built this budget thinking what the province might do for funding, so if it is not close then will be a need to find ways to adapt.

Key Highlights of Budget 2023-24:

- Requested funding allocation from MFS and was approved for that amount. \$1,715,862.
- All salaries/benefits are now all covered by a funding source. Exception: Occasional Child Care, which is not eligible.
- Francophone Counselor is now an ongoing contracted service.
- Video production investments, project continuation.
- Child Care Centre budget has full staff compliment at Shearwater; closure to WPCC most staff have moved to SCC.
- Projecting \$3,768 surplus budget for MFRC budget, increase from last year. Modest change from 2022-2023 budget.
- Projecting a small surplus for SCC 2023-24 budget. Reflects changes in having full staff compliment, increased enrollment.
- Reflects change in funding model for Shearwater Children's Centre.

No questions.

Erica McCurdy from BDO presented Audit findings.

- Have overseen the audit over the last few years.
- Work closely with Baker Tilley, Executive Director, and finance team.
- Proposed a clean audit.
- Issued final audit on June 5, 2023, presented to the finance team and Board Finance Committee; provided a detailed Audit report, and a package to the Board of Directors.

No questions.

Motion to approve the 2022-2023 financials as presented.

Motioned by: 17 Second by: 7

Approved by 30

MOTION CARRIED

New Board Members & Slate of Officer Presentation:

Recruitment for the 2023-2024 began in April seeking five board members to replace those that have completed their board terms or did not renew.

The Committee received 13 board applications and 5 being selected and presented this evening:

Dani Alaire – community seat
Desiree Tan – family member
Greg Moffat – family member
Jordan Elliott - family member
Suzette Belliveau Legault - family member

For Executive roles:

Larissa and Amanda are in the middle of their current terms for their positions.
Lisa Purdy is re-offering for Treasurer on a 2-year term.
Lindsey Coshell offering for a 2-year term as Secretary.

Motion to accept the five new Board of Director Candidates for the 2023-2024 HRMFRC Board and Executive roles.

Motioned by: Lisa Purdy Second by: 16

Approved by 14

Opposed by 18

Motion did not pass

MOTION DECLINED

Question: How many applicants?

Answer: 13 applied. 7 were interviewed. Best candidates that matched board requirements were selected.

Question: Community member requested more background information be provided on the selection process and each candidate.

Response: Recruitment committee members provided details on the rigorous recruitment process including application, interviews, scoring and selection. Use of best practices. Candidate bios were presented for each of the 5 candidates.

Suggestion from community member that Halifax Chamber has a good matrix presented at the AGM.

Question: What would happen if candidates were not elected?

Answer: Board still meets requirement. The additional 5 candidates would not be accepted to our Board.

Board will operate as is with 7 elected family members, board meets quorum.

Answer from Chair: If we don't have enough for a board, we would defer to MFS and the Base Commander to appoint board members. We would run the risk of having an interruption in services.

Answer from MFS Representative: the MOU stipulates that there needs to be 7 voting members on the Board of Directors, satisfying the 51% military family composition. If the organization falls under that requirement, MFS can provide permission to operate for a short period of time; however, if the numbers fall below the provincial requirement, MFS and the Base Commander would have to look at assigning a temporary Board until recruitment of adequate numbers can be achieved in order to ensure that operations of the MFRC do not have to cease. We have to ensure supports are available for families.

Chair asks if there are anymore questions or information required before voting again. We had the conversation before we make the decision, so can we make the motion again to vote again, or does the community have any amendments.

Question: We have voted no, can we put other candidates forward?

Answer: Board can Co-Opt as needed. Candidates that were interviewed but not presented this evening cannot be considered because of the motion made that any candidates not selected were removed from consideration.

Asked to motion again.

Motion to accept the Candidates presented for the 2023-2024 HRMFRC Board of Directors.

Motion By: 17 Second: 16
Approved by 18
Opposed by 18

Motion did not pass
MOTION DECLINED

Motion to Treasure (Lisa) and Secretary (Lindsey) positions.

Motioned by: Tracey Second by: Hannah
Approved by 14
Opposed by 18

Motion didn't pass
MOTION DECLINED

Presentation of Departing Board Members:

Hannah, Tracey, Jacquelyn, Mora

Added section to the agenda:

Open Questions:

Question from community member/parent group: AGM report published states HRMFRC Board had made reasonable efforts to make decision to close. What were the efforts?

Answer: This is largely an operational, not governance decision. We know, a notice was sent out via sandbox last February about the staffing shortage and the potential that parents would be turned away on any given day, center worked hard to mitigate that. In the AGM report last year, remarks were made on staff shortage, and ECE issue. On the parent Bulletin board there was a statement in the licensing updates that the Board was advised of staffing shortages. Also shared that Shearwater staff going to WPCC. Information was being shared.

Comment from community member/parent group: Board made resolution 2021 AGM for a Parent Committee and was never struck, the decision leading up to the closure didn't come to the parent group.

Answer: We did keep an eye on this, chair personally checked into it when chair heard this concern. In the time after the 2021 AGM a TOR was made, things were being put in place for it,

but the director spent a lot of time working on the floor in ratio and, it was also hard for the director to do this and run two centres. We heard from parents the director being in two centres was challenging.

Chair defers to ED to respond as it was an operational decision.

Executive Director stated the board met with the parent group last week and as agreed, they will provide responses to their concerns in writing.

- ED spoke to the staff shortage crisis impact and the work to mitigate since 2018. This is a sector issue, there are no trained staff to recruit. And was compounded by COVID. We tried everything we could keep operating and limit the impact on families, including the Director and other admin positions working in the classrooms, this was not sustainable.
- WPCC has been mitigating challenges including one Director operating 2 locations, we heard this was not working for families, and it was not working operationally.
- ED apologized directly to the families present for the personal impact of the closure. Acknowledging their concerns have been heard, including they wanted more communication before the closure. We did all we could to keep it open.
- Remaining open would have resulted in reduced hours of operation and turning families away when staffing could not meet ratio. It would have become an unreliable service.
- We are committed to Shearwater Children's Centre, there is now a full staff, as WPCC staff moved over there, though the NS plan and funding remains unknown, as Baker Tilly stated in their presentation earlier this evening.

Question from community member/parent group: What were you doing to recruit staff, saw only one advertisement?

Response by ED:

- Staffing shortage since 2018.
- Centres been poaching ECE's from each other for years, there are no ECE's to recruit.
- Not enough ECE graduates.
- We have practicum students and hire them; we recruited every way we can.
- Center would have closed in 2018, if Director hadn't agreed to manage both.
- ED understands families believe we could have done more, apologize it appears we didn't do enough and did not communicate challenges enough. We believed we were communicating the staff shortage challenges and impact, and we understand from you that you wanted more information.

Question from community member/parent group: Retention, what were you doing to retain the staff you had? **Question:** Why are people leaving, should have been more attractive? *(Note: several questions were being asked all at once)*

Response by ED:

- History of only increasing parent fees when needed and always goes to staff compensation.

- Provincial fee freeze happened in 2018, impacted ability to increase wages, and no new funding.
- The board approved annual increases for staff wages and benefits, when there was no new funding.
- Board approved RRSP matching program, despite no new funding.
- With new NS plan, they set wages and fees. We no longer make these decisions.
- Majority of WPCC staff now working in SCC, we retained staff.

Comment by community member/parent group: this started when closure was in October, and families could only articulate their feelings at the AGM.

Response by Chair:

- As the board, challenges in staffing lead to an increased risk to WPCC children.
- We heard from community members in 1:1 meeting with chair and ED.
- We received a lot of information from families.
- Board also received a lot of information through a community meeting families held with MFS.
- Board will provide responses in a written report, as agreed in recent meeting with the parent group.
- Since this began, we reviewed policies and stood up the Family Advisory Committee in Shearwater CC.
- We continue to prioritize recruiting for families on the Board that have children in the centre.
- WPCC was investigated by the Department on 3 complaints, and all have been found that the Centre was in compliance with regulations.
- Board has heard you and a number of things have been reviewed since.

Comment from community member/parent group: Legal letter that was sent to this group of families and not yet rescinded.

Response from Board Chair: Things were happening that perhaps the whole parent group was not aware of and had to be taken into consideration of the safety of staff.

Comment by community member/parent group: Painted as an angry group, when we are just concerned, care profoundly and want conversation and dialogue.

Response from Chair:

- Learnings we have taken away from this experience.
- We will have a response created for you, in the written report.
- This issue has gone a lot of places from the organization to the board to the base to MFS and somewhere along the line that label must have happened outside of the Board, and I am sorry that it did.

Question from community member/parent group: Holes in by-laws, surprised no amendment to by-laws this AGM.

Response from Vice Chair:

- We want to do a fulsome by-law review.
- We wanted to learn and hear from the community groups concerns before putting revisions forward.
- High priority next Board year.

Question from community member/parent group: 2021-2022 mention of Governance expert to come in, and then suspended, will that happen this year?

Answer: It's noted as being half completed, COVID waylaid it. With a by-law review, perhaps we will work on finishing that.

Question from community member/parent group: Next year will be under our current by-laws?

Answer: Yes. By-laws must be reviewed as a whole, not by pieces. There was no time to complete them for this AGM.

Question from community member/parent group: Bring in more piecemeal bylaw changes in future AGMs?

Answer: We did work on policies, TORs, and noted changes for By-Laws.

Comment from community member/parent group: I am not a governance expert to know what policies are governed by a bylaw or not. Will there be a policy on how we can engage with the Board, Special meetings, reviewing documents?

Answer: Minutes Policy will have this.

Commanding Officer Remarks:

Unfortunately, Base and Wing Commanders couldn't attend.

Base Chief Beazley, passed along a thank you to the MFRC team for their quick response and support to families impacted by the wildfires.

Closing Remarks by Chair:

Lot of pride in the organization and the work they do in many areas to support families. Over the last year have seen growth and changes such as support in the schools, pilot projects. The organization received the inaugural CPHRNS Wellness Workplace Award, MFRC mobilized

quickly for those families impacted by the wildfire, 38 supported with accommodations, and over 100 with care packages provided. They used MFRC spaces to build the community. Thank you for support of, Base and Wing. The next Board year we will work on many things, some that were discussed this evening. The board will support operations to do more wonderful things for families.

Call for Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn AGM at 6:53pm.

Motioned by 24

MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted by:

Lindsey Coshell
Acting Board Secretary

Larissa Page
Board Chair

Note: *Following the AGM, the Board appointed the slate of officers necessary to enable the Board to continue to provide governance and oversight of MFRC. These actions mitigated against risk to MFRC's long term viability as a non-profit charity organization, given specific requirements it is expected to meet under the Nova Scotia Society's Act, Registry of Joint Stocks, and the Memorandum of Understanding with Military Family Services. Through this process, one new member was appointed to the Board to meet the 51% family member requirement for a functioning Board. This decision was made with appropriate due diligence and with consideration of the need for effective governance and oversight to enable the continued operations of the MFRC.*