



# FIREFLY

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES

March 25, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

*Microsoft Teams*

PRESENT:	Kim Vares	Alisha Dasti-Hill	Adrian Lizzi
	Jennifer Johnson	Crystal Page	Sarah-lynn Klassen
	Jared Ralko		
REGRETS:	Debbie Larson	Carlynnne Bell	Michelle Gaudet
STAFF:	Karen Ingebrigtson	Darcia Curtis	Kirby Parks
	Jenn Marquis	Tammy Hanstead	Jackie Hummelbrunner
GUESTS:	Karim Suleman, FIREFLY Clinical Manager		
	Joel Willett, FIREFLY Clinical Manager		

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Ms. Vares called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Vares welcomed Ms. Willett and Mr. Suleman to the meeting.

Mr. Lizzi acknowledged that FIREFLY offices operate on the original lands and territories of the Anishinaabeg, the Mushkegowuk and the Métis peoples. Treaties 3, 5 and 9 were signed upon these lands. We strive as guests on these lands to honour our responsibilities to care for this land and uphold the Treaties that were signed therein.

### FIREFLY MOMENT

Ms. Curtis provided an update on the Winnipeg Jets Alumni and Friends tour that was held in Kenora on October 4 and 5, 2024. Ms. Curtis highlighted the partnership between Wauzhushk Onigum Nation and Triple P.L.A.Y., which brought the event to the community as a fundraiser to support children and youth in arts, culture, and sports activities. Ms. Curtis presented two videos showcasing the events in both Wauzhushk Onigum Nation and Kenora and recognized the key contributions of Mr. Reynard, Triple P.L.A.Y. Coordinator, in collaborating with the Winnipeg Jets. Mr. Reynard will attend the May 30th Board meeting to present Triple P.L.A.Y.'s work and strategic plan. Ms. Curtis acknowledged Ms. Dunford's efforts in organizing and supporting the event.

Ms. Curtis announced that another Winnipeg Jets Alumni event will take place in Kenora in October 2025. This event will incorporate Project 11, an initiative inspired by former Winnipeg Jets and Manitoba Moose player Rick Rypien, which promotes mental health awareness and coping strategies for students. FIREFLY, in collaboration with Project 11 and Triple P.L.A.Y., aims to expand this initiative to other communities.

### PRESENTATION

Mr. Suleman presented the "Orthotic Clinic" proposal to the Board, outlining the goal of establishing a Northwestern Ontario Orthotics Clinic to provide accessible, local care for families who currently travel to Thunder Bay or Winnipeg for specialized services. By leveraging FIREFLY's regional presence and partnerships, the clinic aims to reduce travel burdens and improve access to orthotic care. Mr. Suleman proposed launching the first clinic in Kenora in October 2025.

Mr. Suleman noted that currently, specialized orthotics services in Northwestern Ontario are limited, with only occasional clinics held in communities such as Dryden, Sioux Lookout, and Fort Frances. While these clinics offer some local access, services are provided in hospital settings and remain inconsistent. Feedback from client surveys highlighted travel as a significant barrier, with 85% of families indicating that time, cost, and transportation challenges often prevent them from receiving adequate care. Some families shared concerns about taking multiple days off for appointments, while others expressed difficulty completing reimbursement paperwork for Manitoba-based orthotics services.

Mr. Suleman shared that to support the clinic's sustainability, FIREFLY plans to collaborate with community partners in Kenora, Red Lake, and Fort Frances. The clinic's expected outcomes include improved service accessibility, enhanced awareness through community partnerships, and better coverage for in-province services. In the short term, the clinic will establish materials and equipment at FIREFLY and improve service access for families. Over time, the clinic aims to introduce additional para-services, such as serial casting and a PT toe-walking clinic, and reach 90% capacity through adult service uptake. The long-term vision includes developing a sustainable, revenue-generating clinic with a consistent orthotist presence and improved client satisfaction.

FIREFLY will partner with an existing orthotics company, such as Thunder Bay Orthopedic, to minimize risk and cost while ensuring a streamlined service model. Next steps include liaising with the Lake of the Woods District Hospital, formalizing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Thunder Bay Orthopedics, acquiring necessary clinic materials, and developing a communications strategy. The first clinic is set to launch in October 2025, with plans to expand pediatric appointments to FIREFLY offices in Dryden, Sioux Lookout, and Fort Frances. A question and answer period followed.

#### REVIEW OF AGENDA

MOTION #1      Moved by Jared Ralko  
                      Seconded by Jennifer Johnson  
                      That the agenda of March 25, 2025 be approved as presented.  
                      CARRIED

#### DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

#### APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Consent agenda items:

- 2024/2025 Board meeting attendance
- February 25, 2025 Board Development Committee Meeting Minutes
- February 25, 2025 FIREFLY Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
- March 20, 2025 Special Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION #2      Moved by Sarah-lynn Klassen  
                      Seconded by Alisha Dasti-Hill  
                      That the consent agenda of March 25, 2025 be approved.  
                      CARRIED

#### ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

None

## COMMITTEE UPDATES

### **Governance and Quality Committee Meeting**

Ms. Vares provided an update to the Board, sharing that the committee reviewed the following annual surveys:

- FIREFLY Board of Directors Annual Evaluation 2025
- FIREFLY Board Chair Evaluation 2025
- FIREFLY Board Individual Director Self-Evaluation 2025

Ms. Vares noted that there were no suggestions for changes to the surveys this year. Ms. Hanstead will share the annual evaluations with the FIREFLY Board of Directors the first week of May, giving two weeks for completion. Ms. Vares shared that as part of the Governance and Quality Committee work plan, the committee reviews the evaluations annually and shares the evaluations with the FIREFLY Board of Director. The committee will review the survey results on May 30th before presenting them at the Board meeting. The Board will then use the findings to develop an action plan.

Ms. Vares shared that an ad hoc committee reviewed the by-laws in November and made a few changes. The committee reviewed the suggested changes this evening, and will be shared with the Board two weeks prior to the May 30th Board meeting for review and discussion. The by-laws will then be brought forward to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for recommendation of approval.

Ms. Vares presented the initiative of striking a Nominating Committee prepare for the election of officers at the June 18th Board meeting. Ms. Vares will bring the matter to the Board seeking Directors interested in fulfilling the role of the Nominating Committee.

### CEO and LEAD AGENCY REPORT

Ms. Ingebrigtsen provided an update on key funding concerns for FIREFLY, particularly regarding Autism funding for 2025/2026. With the provincial election, access to Ministry staff remains limited, delaying discussions on capacity challenges. The writ is expected to be lifted by the end of March or early April, leaving the status of end-of-year additional funding uncertain. Autism program funding is of particular concern, as FIREFLY is awaiting confirmation of the 2025/2026 funding allocation. Ms. Ingebrigtsen will meet with the Ministry Program Supervisor this week to discuss these risks.

Ms. Ingebrigtsen also provided an update on recent changes to Jordan's Principle funding, which ensures First Nations children receive essential care and supports without delay. On February 10th, the federal government announced that funding would no longer cover home renovations, non-medical supports, or sporting events, citing program abuse, a backlog of 140,000 urgent requests, and sustainability concerns. The government is also signalling the need for provinces to assume greater responsibility for provincially funded services. This change has significant implications for children and families in the north, where access to specialized services is already limited by geographic and economic barriers. FIREFLY, in partnership with Indigenous service providers, has supported families in need of Speech-Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy, and Physiotherapy through Jordan's Principal funding. The funding also supports critical medical equipment, including wheelchairs, communication tools, and seating devices. Ms. Hummelbrunner is working closely with Indigenous partners to ensure continued access to these vital supports for children and families in the region.

MOTION #3      Moved by Jared Ralko  
                      Seconded by Adrian Lizzi  
                      That the March 2025 CEO and Lead Agency Reports be accepted as presented.  
                      CARRIED

#### FINANCE

Ms. Parks reviewed the draft financial statements for the month ending February 28, 2025 with the Board. Ms. Parks reviewed the investment statements with the Board. A question and answer period followed.

MOTION #4      Moved by Alisha Dasti-Hill  
                      Seconded by Jennifer Johnson  
                      That the draft financial statements for the month ending February 28, 2025 be accepted as presented.  
                      CARRIED

Ms. Vares shared that the Board met on March 20, 2025 to review the draft 2025/26 budget.

MOTION #5      Moved by Jared Ralko  
                      Seconded by Sarah-lynn Klassen  
                      That the FIREFLY Board of Directors approve the 2025/26 budget as presented.  
                      CARRIED

#### OPERATIONS AND CLIENT SERVICE REPORT

Ms. Marquis reviewed the polar graphs with the Board, highlighting progress from all four pillars. Ms. Marquis reviewed strategic highlights and FIREFLY highlights with the Board. A question and answer period followed.

MOTION #6      Moved by Crystal Page  
                      Seconded by Jennifer Johnson  
                      That the February 2025 Service Report be accepted as presented.  
                      CARRIED

#### QUALITY OF CARE

Ms. Ingebrigtsen reviewed the Board Self-Assessment of the Governance Standards with the Board. Ms. Ingebrigtsen provided the Board with an introduction to Governance Standards, and reviewed sections 2.1.1 to 2.2.10. Ms. Ingebrigtsen shared that a briefing document will be gathered in response to each of the standard areas.

#### NEW BUSINESS

None

#### IN CAMERA

Motion #7      Moved by Alisha Dasti-Hill  
                      Seconded by Jared Ralko  
                      That the Board moves to in-camera at 8:07 p.m.  
                      CARRIED

### EVALUATION

Mr. Lizzi provided the evaluation of the Board meeting, noting that there was ample time to review the meeting material.

- Good discussion
- Chair stuck with the schedule
- Board covered a lot of material during the meeting
- Accomplished a lot

### NEXT MEETING

Friday, April 25, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. Kenora

Dinner at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Dasti-Hill will evaluate the meeting and present the Land Acknowledgment.

### ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the Chairperson accepted a motion to adjourn at 8:32 p.m.



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Tammy Hanstead

Recorder



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Kim Vares

Chairperson

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April 25, 2025

Date

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April 25, 2025

Date