



FIREFLY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES

May 30, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:	Kim Vares	Alisha Dasti-Hill	Adrian Lizzi
	Jennifer Johnson	Crystal Page	Sarah-lynn Klassen
	Jared Ralko	Debbie Larson	
REGRETS:	Carlynn Bell	Michelle Gaudet	Kirby Parks
STAFF:	Karen Ingebrigtson	Darcia Curtis	Jenn Marquis
	Joel Willett	Tammy Hanstead	Jackie Hummelbrunner
GUESTS:	Barry Reynard, Triple P.L.A.Y Program Coordinator		

Ms. Vares called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Ms. Vares welcomed Mr. Reynard to the meeting. Ms. Curtis introduced Ms. Willett, new Director of Service Excellence and Partnerships to the Board. The Board introduced themselves to Ms. Willett.

Ms. Curtis shared that a new land acknowledgement was launched this week during the in-person all-staff meeting. Ms. Curtis provided an overview of the development process, noting that the new version reflects the work of FIREFLY and the full geographic area served by FIREFLY.

Ms. Larson provided the new land acknowledgement, sharing that at FIREFLY, we express our deep gratitude and respect for the traditional territories of the many Indigenous peoples across Ontario. We honour the rich histories, vibrant cultures, and enduring connections that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have to the lands and waters that surround us. We also recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions of Indigenous children, youth, and families, whose strengths and resilience continue to enrich our communities.

At the same time, we acknowledge the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization on Indigenous families and children, including the devastating legacy of residential schools. We take responsibility for addressing these injustices and remain committed to walking alongside Indigenous communities with humility, integrity, and care.

Rooted in Northwestern Ontario, our work extends to communities across the province. We are thankful for the privilege to live and work on these lands and are dedicated to fostering meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities—built on respect, equity, and a shared commitment to reconciliation.

FIREFLY approaches this work with heart—bringing dedication, empathy, and respect to all that we do. We believe in empowerment, celebrating the strengths of those we serve and supporting their growth and confidence. Relationships are at the core of our work, and we value connection, collaboration, and understanding as essential to building strong and resilient communities.

As we move forward, we hold these truths in our hearts and embrace our shared responsibility to create a better future—one that reflects Healthy People, Resilient Families, and Vibrant Communities.

FIREFLY MOMENT

Ms. Marquis presented the FIREFLY Moment, highlighting the 2025 FIREFLY Conference. Ms. Marquis shared that staff from across the region gathered in Kenora for two days of learning and connection at Seven Generations Education Institute. The event included a celebration marking the transition in leadership, with a farewell to outgoing CEO Ms. Ingebrigtsen and a warm welcome to incoming CEO Ms. Curtis. The celebration, held at Brewer's Village, featured food, entertainment, and a performance by musical guests, Shred Kelly. Ms. Klassen, Board Vice Chair, delivered a thoughtful and eloquent speech honoring both CEOs. The conference offered valuable presentations, and strong collaborative work is expected to emerge from the sessions. These in-person staff gatherings are held in Kenora every two years.

PRESENTATION

Mr. Reynard provided key highlights from the Triple P.L.A.Y. Annual Report, which was included in the Board meeting package, and delivered a presentation regarding an upcoming event in October 2025, planned in partnership with the True North Youth Foundation's PROJECT 11 initiative. As part of the presentation, Mr. Reynard shared a YouTube video titled "*This is PROJECT 11*," which introduced the program as an engaging, cross-curricular, proactive mental health initiative designed to support teachers and students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The program features video-based lessons and daily activities aimed at promoting mental health awareness and building resiliency in the classroom and beyond.

Mr. Reynard provided an overview of *Rally for Children's Mental Health*, a large-scale event to be held in Kenora in October 2025. Planned components include a training session for 200 teachers, community visits, youth workshops, an adult wellness seminar, a gala, and hockey games.

Mr. Reynard expressed appreciation to FIREFLY and the Board for their support and emphasized the importance of community partnerships in organizing such an event. A question and answer period followed.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

The Board deferred the governance self-assessment to the next meeting and added the Board meeting schedule to the open session agenda.

MOTION #1 Moved by Alisha Dasti-Hill
 Seconded by Crystal Page
 That the agenda of April 25, 2025 be approved as amended.
 CARRIED

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Consent agenda items:

- 2024/2025 Board meeting attendance
- April 26, 2025 Board Development Committee Meeting Minutes
- April 25, 2025 FIREFLY Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

MOTION #2 Moved by Sarah-lynn Klassen
 Seconded by Jennifer Johnson
 That the consent agenda of May 30, 2025 be approved.
 CARRIED

ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

None

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Governance and Quality Committee Meeting

Ms. Larson provided an update to the Board noting that the committee reviewed the following survey results:

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

Following the review of the survey results, the committee engaged in discussion and developed a 2025/2026 Board Action Plan outlining key priorities for Board focus. The Action Plan will be presented to the Board at the next meeting.

CEO and LEAD AGENCY REPORT

Ms. Ingebrigtsen provided an update on the FIREFLY Eating Disorders proposals, noting that Ms. Vares submitted additional correspondence to the Honourable Vijay Thanigasalam, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, emphasizing the need for targeted, local funding for eating disorder services in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. The submission included a comprehensive package outlining the history of FIREFLY's proposals and recent supporting data. This correspondence was also shared with the Honourable Greg Rickford and FIREFLY's Ministry of Health supervisors. A copy of the letter and relevant data was included in the Board meeting package.

Ms. Ingebrigtsen shared information about the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), an organization that provides data and analysis to support improvements in health care, system performance, and population health across Canada. This month, CIHI released a report on Child and Youth Mental Health, examining data from the past six years for individuals aged 5 to 24 who accessed care for mental health disorders. Ms. Ingebrigtsen noted that the report relies primarily on hospital-based data, as community-level data remains difficult to capture. The report emphasizes the growing need to address eating disorders, which have significantly increased since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and represent complex, potentially life-threatening conditions for youth. A link to the full report was included in the Board meeting package.

Ms. Ingebrigtsen highlighted that at a province-wide meeting this week with Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO), advocacy strategies were discussed. An economic frame with messages about the impact on children and families in this current environment and prevention of costly services through early community service intervention were considered. Additionally, strong input from the north emphasized the importance of an equity-based approaches, highlighting the significant barriers to accessing services experienced by northern youth.

Ms. Ingebrigtsen provided a Lead Agency update, noting that the Lead Agency Consortium met with representatives from the Ministry of Health Centre of Excellence for Mental Health and Addictions

(CoE). The CoE is conducting a stakeholder consultation to gather views on the current system, leveraging strengths and opportunities, beginning to envision the system in 2030 and to seek input on steps to move towards that future state. The 2020 MoH Roadmap to Wellness identified the CoE to serve as a foundation on which the Roadmap to Wellness is built. The CoE is responsible for system management service coordination and driving meaningful quality improvements including a system that is more aligned and unified. The CoE is now working on building a 3–5-year system plan that is operational and targeted to launch Fall 2025. Ms. Ingebrigtsen noted that, in contrast to the adult system, the children’s mental health system is highly organized, actively engaged in system planning, and guided by established core service and process frameworks. Following discussion, it was proposed that the LAC take the lead in developing the system plan for the children’s sector.

Ms. Ingebrigtsen shared a link with the Board to a presentation on Infant Mental Health from Dr. Chaya Kulkarni, Director of Infant and Early Mental Health Promotion (IEMPH) at the Hospital for Sick Children. Dr. Kulkarni emphasized the importance of prioritizing infant and early mental health, noting that early experiences, both positive and negative, have a profound impact on brain development, and that caregiver-child relationships, which are foundational to mental health, form before the age of five and are often overlooked. Ms. Ingebrigtsen further noted that Dr. Crookall, who now provides psychiatric services at FIREFLY, has received training through IEMHP, enhancing the organization’s capacity to support infants and their families.

Ms. Ingebrigtsen shared that Ms. Curtis will attend the next Lead Agency meeting in Toronto on June 19th.

MOTION #3 Moved by Jennifer Johnson
 Seconded by Crystal Page
 That the April 2025 CEO and Lead Agency Reports be accepted as presented.
 CARRIED

FINANCE

None

OPERATIONS AND CLIENT SERVICE REPORT

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

MOTION #4 Moved by Jared Ralko
 Seconded by Alisha Dasti-Hill
 That the April 2025 Service Report be accepted as presented.
 CARRIED

QUALITY OF CARE

Ms. Ingebrigtsen reviewed the proposed revisions to the FIREFLY By-laws with the Board of Directors. A question and answer period followed. The revised By-laws will be brought forward to the Board for approval at the Annual General Meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE/READING

EKO Conference Report

Ms. Vares noted that her report from the EKO Conference was included in the Board meeting package for the information of the Board.

Letter of Thanks

Ms. Vares shared that a letter from the Honourable Greg Rickford was included in the Board meeting package for the information of the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

2025/2026 Board Meeting Schedule

Ms. Vares presented a proposed change to the Board meeting start times, suggesting a shift from 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The 2025/2026 Board meeting schedule includes three in-person meetings on Friday evenings and six virtual meetings on Tuesday evenings. The September Board meeting will rotate among Red Lake, Sioux Lookout, and Fort Frances. The April Board Retreat will be held in Dryden, and the Annual General Meeting and the June Board meeting will take place in Kenora. Ms. Vares opened the floor for discussion. Following discussion, the Board agreed to change the regular Board meeting start time to 6:00 p.m., with committee meetings to begin at 5:00 p.m. When a Fiscal Advisory Committee meeting coincides with another committee meeting in the same quarter, the Fiscal Advisory meeting will be scheduled earlier.

IN CAMERA

Motion #5 Moved by Jared Ralko
 Seconded by Adrian Lizzi
 That the Board moves to in-camera at 8:11 p.m.
 CARRIED

EVALUATION

Ms. Larson provided the meeting evaluation, noting that the meeting was well conducted and that materials were received in advance. Ms. Larson highlighted the Triple P.L.A.Y. presentation as particularly interesting and informative, and expressed appreciation for the CEO's report. Ms. Larson also commended the organization's clear targets and progress, remarking that the proposed By-law revisions were well prepared.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. Kenora
Ms. Bell will evaluate the meeting and present the Land Acknowledgment.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the Chairperson accepted a motion to adjourn at 8:24 p.m.



Tammy Hanstead
Recorder

June 18, 2025

Date



Kim Vares
Chairperson

June 18, 2025

Date