
67TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – MINUTES

3:30-4:00 pm Reception & Refreshments

1. Call to Order, Greetings & Land Acknowledgment – Paul Rossi, President

In our work towards a community where no one is left behind, KW Counselling Services gratefully acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of the Ah-nish-nah-bay, Ho-deh-no-show-nee and Neutral Peoples and on the Haldimand Tract which runs almost 10 kilometres deep on either side of the Grand River.

2. Approval of Minutes of 66th Annual General Meeting – Paul Rossi

Elaine Read brought the Motion: I move that the minutes of the 66th Annual General Meeting held May 23, 2017 be approved.

The Motion was seconded by Michael Snyders, and passed.

3. Treasurer's Report – Neil Bailey for Shelley White, Treasurer

Neil Bailey reported on behalf of Shelley White. Neil noted that the agency had completed another successful year and ended the year with a small surplus. Despite numerous funding challenges, we still met our contractual obligations and service delivery targets. Neil congratulated Leslie Josling and the Management Team for ensuring this success. Neil also thanked Leslie Josling and Scott Williams for their successful work on grant writing. Neil thanked Noel Blake for his hard work throughout the year.

Neil Bailey brought the Motion: I move that the financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2017 be approved.

The Motion was seconded by Elaine Read, and passed.

4. Appointment of the Auditors for 2018 – Neil Bailey

Neil Bailey brought the Motion: I move that Clarke, Starke, and Diegel be appointed Auditors for the Year 2018.

The Motion was seconded by Kristine Schmeiss, and passed.

5. Confirmation of the Acts of the Board for the preceding year – Paul Rossi

Michael Snyders brought the Motion: I move that with regard to the Acts of the Board of Directors for the preceding year, be it resolved that all Acts, contracts, By-Laws, proceedings, appointments, and elections made, done, and taken by the Directors and Officers of the Corporation since the date of the last Annual Meeting of the Members, are hereby approved and confirmed.

The Motion was seconded by Cong-Rong Xie, and passed.

6. Recognition – Paul Rossi & Elaine Read

Resignations from Board of Directors:

- **Joseph Anderson (2014-2017)**

- Paul noted that Joe couldn't be here today. Joe served as Chair, and Co-Chair of the Fundraising Events Committee. He was instrumental in our partnership on the Festival of Fools event and on creating our improv comedy night event.
- **Jo-Anne Gibson (2014/2015-2018)**
 - Paul noted that Jo-Anne couldn't be here today. Jo-Anne served on our Human Resources Committee. She was a great help to us in ensuring the Board understood its governance role and in providing us with evaluation tools.
- **Yoke Kennedy (2015-2017)**
 - Paul noted that Yoke couldn't be here today. Yoke served on our Fundraising Events Committee and we always appreciated her thoughtful and new ideas.
- **Laura Umbrio (2012-2018)**
 - Paul and Elaine presented Laura with a plaque in recognition of her work. Laura served on our Fundraising Events Committee and has been instrumental in the success of our Surprise Movie Night event each year. We have been the grateful recipients of her in-kind support through Oliver & Bonacini and Proof Kitchen + Lounge. Though Laura is retiring from the Board, she will continue on our Fundraising Events Committee.

Paul also noted that Bettina Burgess has completed her first term on the Board of Directors. She is a member of our Human Resources Committee and will continue into a second term.

7. Nomination & Election of Directors – Paul Rossi (presenting nominees for election)
*Michael Snyders brought the Motion: **I move that Andy Mao, Kristine Schmeiss, Aaron Stauch, and Rebecca Wagner** (See Bios on back side of this page) **be elected for a three year term and; that Bettina Burgess be re-elected for a second three-year term commencing May 22, 2018.***

The Motion was seconded by Cong-Rong Xie, and passed.

8. President's Report – Paul Rossi

Paul started by explaining why KW Counselling Services is important to him. He shared the story of his older brother who grew up being gay in the 60s and 70s and how his brother would have had a very different life if he had access to services like OK2BME. Even today, Paul said, too many people fall through the cracks. He shared a story of a friend who took his own life in the last year. Though this person's friends and family encouraged him to seek help for his depression, he would not do so. The stigma around mental illness was too great for him to overcome. One of Paul's goals in continuing to work with the agency is to increase mental health awareness and reduce stigma. His hope is that people like his friend will seek the help they need and work towards fulfilling and productive lives.

Paul noted that media coverage on mental health in the last year has been great. Mental health is a hot topic and Paul's glad we're talking about it. KWCS is on the forefront of mental health service in an accessible way. New services like our Video Counselling will make counselling accessible to many more people. Our Walk In Counselling Clinic celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2017 and has been a huge success.

Paul discussed the global climate of populism. He noted that our vision remains a community where no one is left behind. Paul thanked the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, RBC Foundation, and the KW Community Foundation for their support of OK2BME in 2017. Thanks to those funders, 2017 was the first year in which we were able to offer free counselling to LGBTQ2+ people of all ages. We were also able to work towards expanding the number of GSAs in local schools, and to increase the size of our annual GSA Conference.

Paul noted that, thanks to the KW Community Foundation, we were also able to continue our Arabic-speaking counselling work with Syrian newcomers and others. Paul noted that the clients in our Spanish-speaking group, when faced with a funding shortfall that decreased their service, did their own fundraising. They sold food, and were the recipients of funds raised at a holiday concert.

2017 was also the year of #MeToo and #TimesUp. Paul noted that there has never before been so much support for women coming forward with their stories. With our Violence Against Women counselling and Strong Moms, Safe Kids program, KW Counselling continues to be present for these clients. We applaud their courage.

Paul noted that we have faced a large funding shortfall from the United Way. He congratulated Leslie and the Management Team for their work on ensuring that the impact to our service delivery will be minimal. Paul appealed to the community; now more than ever, KW Counselling Services needs continued financial support from the community.

9. Executive Director's Report – Leslie Josling, Executive Director

Leslie began by noting that 2017 held more opportunity and threat than she had ever before experienced. The mental health and addictions crisis has thankfully, at long last been recognized and we are seeing both provincial and federal commitments to funding for mental health services. Leslie noted that, until recently, Family Service agencies like ours have largely been excluded from the Ministry of Health's funding commitments. We hope to see funding in the near future. This funding will be important as we continue to experience shortfalls in the funding we receive from United Way. We had a 37% reduction over the last two years.

Leslie used the concept of her and her son doing doubles sculling as a metaphor for ideating in the context of the current mental health system. This activity requires concentration and coordination and two individuals can learn more when they row together than when they're apart. Curing something as complex as mental illness will require that we bring all our best approaches to bear. As we move forward, we will be challenged by the methods and systems employed by the Ministry of Health but we will be able to offer our unique expertise.

Leslie thanked the Ontario Trillium Foundation for the Seed Grant which allowed us to increase the agency's internet capacity and begin to offer online video counselling; an innovative service that allows us to be even more accessible to clients.

Leslie believes that history will look fondly on 2017 as a time when we began to work together as a province to bring our best to bear on a problem that might some day make for a community where no one is left behind.

10. Adjournment of Meeting – Paul Rossi

Elaine Read brought the Motion: I move that the 67th Annual General Meeting be adjourned. The Motion was seconded by Neil Bailey, and passed.

11. Volunteer of the Year Award – Dejana Bjelogrljic

Dejana Bjelogrljic, Director of the Walk In Counselling Clinic, presented our Volunteer of the Year Award to Brianna Burnett. Brianna volunteers as an Intake Worker at the Walk In Counselling Clinic every second week. She has been with us for two years and, in that time, has completed 461 intakes.

Brianna thanked Dejana, Georgina de Barros, and Catherine Bailey for their support and encouragement. Brianna noted that she had learned incredible lessons from our clients. She is honoured and grateful that she could make an impact here when, all along, she felt we were making an impact on her.

12. Guest Speaker – Deepa Ahluwalia, Equity and Inclusion Officer, WRDSB

Deepa is honoured to have been partnering with OK2BME and KW Counselling Services for about 10 years. She was pleased to be here to discuss some of the successes we've had together. Deepa noted that the school board has a responsibility for inclusion and representation for everyone including LGBTQ2+ people. They have a responsibility to demonstrate a commitment to each and every student. Deepa shared a moving poem written by an 11 year-old LGBTQ2+ student.

Our partnership began with the production of a resource DVD called LGBTQ OutLoud. This resource, though now almost eight years old, is still requested by educators. This was the beginning of a beautiful partnership.

Deepa is grateful for OK2BME's help in supporting GSAs in schools. Deepa noted our very successful collaborations on the annual GSA Conference. The first conference was in 2010 and was attended by perhaps 60 students. The 2017 conference had nearly 300 students and educators present.

We have also partnered on drafting and reviewing the school board's guidelines for supporting transgender staff and students.

Deepa thanked us for our letters of support for the school board raising Pride flags at their sites in the month of June last year and this year.

Deepa noted that she never hesitates to refer parents and students to us for our services and she looks forward to continued efforts and ongoing partnerships. She praised our staff and conveyed her gratitude for all that we do in the community.

13. Closing Remarks – Paul Rossi

Paul thanked everyone for taking the time to attend our AGM and reminded everyone of our upcoming special events:

- June 19, 2018 – Home Hardware Charity Golf Tournament

- September 20 and September 27, 2018 – Surprise Movie Night
- October 13, 2018 – Race to Erase
- Next AGM: Tuesday May 21, 2019

New Director Bios

Andy Mao: Andy Mao completed his Bachelor of Business Administration and Graduate Diploma in Accounting at Wilfrid Laurier University. He now works in the Finance team at Economical Insurance while pursuing a Chartered Professional Accountant designation. Andy was born and raised in Scarborough, Ontario and moved to the Waterloo Region in 2012. He is passionate about understanding the unique needs of the community and identifying opportunities to bridge service gaps. He dedicates his time volunteering extensively, with a focus on community collaboration and development. He has previous volunteer experience with Sustainable Waterloo Region, the Community Music School of Waterloo Region, and the Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union. He now volunteers on the Community Investment Team at United Way Waterloo Region Communities and as a weekly mentor with Junior Achievement.

Kristine Schmeiss: Kristine Schmeiss and her husband Ted, a local small business owner, reside in Waterloo. Together, they enjoy travelling, are avid football fans and love spending time with family. Kristine works for RBC Royal Bank and currently holds the role of Regional Manager of Sales Support in Commercial Banking. Her career in the Financial Services industry began in 1999, the last eight years Kristine has held various leadership roles where she has demonstrated her passion for helping clients and the personal development of her team. Kristine has volunteered on several fundraising and event planning committees including Jeans 'N Scrubs and the Outstanding Women of Laurier she has also organized the collection and delivery of items for the youth at Lutherwood over the last few years. She has also recently joined an Employee Resource Group within RBC Royal Bank in Southwestern Ontario supporting Lean In Circles.

Aaron Stauch: Aaron Stauch is a life long resident of Waterloo Region, having gone to high school in Cambridge; and having lived in Kitchener and Waterloo. Aaron completed his Bachelors and Masters in Environmental Studies at the University of Waterloo, and his Masters of Business Administration at Athabasca University. Aaron has held progressive leadership roles in the environmental, social service, and governmental sectors. Aaron managed children's mental health, and counselling services for a large local not-for-profit. Aaron currently works in the governmental sector overseeing transfer payment governance. Aaron has also served as Vice-Chair for both the Canadian Mental Health Association Grand River Branch, and HopeSpring Cancer Support Centre.

Rebecca Wagner: Rebecca Wagner currently works as Director of Stakeholder Relations with the Office of MPP Daiene Vernile. Rebecca has held leadership and advisory roles with organizations such as Healthy Minds Canada, Elections Canada and the Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre. She has volunteered extensively in Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo, including with Women's College Hospital, Cota, Western University, and the Centre for International Governance Innovation. Rebecca holds an Honours BA in Political Science from Western University and a Master of Arts in Political Science from the University of Waterloo and is currently completing a French Certificate.