



**Houselink Community Homes  
Board Meeting Minutes  
January 21, 2020**

**Present:** Phillip Dufresne (Chair), Linda McNeil, Mary Modeste, Joann Sochor, Colette Snyder, Carole King, Steve Rogers, Natalie Ochrym, Richa Jagota, Charles Finlay

**Absent:** Esther Mwangi

**Staff:** Brian Davis, Helen Cheung, Carol Thames, Peter Marra, and Monica Vaus (minutes)

**Approval of Agenda**

Moved by: Steve Rogers  
Seconded by: Mary Modeste  
Carried

**Conflict of Interest**

None

**Consent Agenda Items**

Receiving and approval of consent items  
Moved by: Colette Snyder  
Seconded by: Carole King  
Carried

**Business Arising & Any Consent Agenda Items Requiring Action or Further Discussion**

Brian elaborated on Houselink finances as reported on page 3 of the Executive Director report and noted that we will be going into a bargaining year.

**Participant Funds Report**

Carol Thames presented a report on the 2019 year of operation of The Peggy Birnberg Legacy Fund, the Families Moving Forward Fund, and the Participant Education Fund. These Participant Funds are the result of our collective fundraising efforts, including the generous annual donation from the Carole Tanenbaum family towards the Peggy Birnberg Fund.

Some noteworthy highlights of this good news report included:

- Fund repayment continues to go slow, but steady. (Repayment is 30% of total funds received).
- A talented young man who loves basketball accessed the Peggy Fund to help pay for tryouts to the Raptors development squad (Raptors905), and although he was not chosen for the squad, he reported that the experience is one that he will never forget.
- 6 children enjoyed summer camps.
- 4 children took family music lessons which included guitar, piano and ballet/modern dance lessons.
- 15 applications were for general interest or return to education courses such as George Brown College, Humber College, University of Toronto, and Hansa Language College.

In summary, the Peggy Birnberg Fund processed 29 successful applications and distributed \$8,603. The Families Moving Forward and Participant Education Fund awarded \$14,841 to 35 individuals and families. Therefore, a total of \$23,444 was distributed to 64 Participants. The Board thanked Carol for the report.

#### **Motion to Receive the Participant Funds Report**

Moved by: Colette Snyder  
Seconded by: Joann Sochor  
Carried

#### **Coldest Night of the Year**

Peter Marra updated the Board on Coldest Night of the Year, our primary fundraising event. This year, we are aiming to raise \$20,000 while raising awareness about the issue of homelessness. Peter encouraged Board members to participate by captaining a team, walking, sponsoring a team, or helping at the event itself. He encouraged the board to use their social and media networks in support of this event. A group effort will help ensure the success of this fundraising event which supports Houselink's unique programs.

#### **Executive Director Performance Appraisal (In-Camera)**

##### **Motion to go In-Camera**

Moved by: Mary Modeste  
Seconded by: Natalie Ochrym  
Carried

##### **Motion to go Out-of-Camera**

Moved by: Steve Rogers  
Seconded by: Linda McNeil  
Carried

### **Update from the Joint Governance Committee**

A progress report from Phillip Dufresne on the work to date by the joint governance committee was included in the Board package. The Executive Director report also provided a comprehensive update.

One key area that the committee finalized was a recommendation on how the vote would be conducted.

The importance of a well-informed member vote was highly stressed. All the reasons why this proposed amalgamation will benefit participants and members of both Houselink and Mainstay need to be clearly identified and communicated. To-date, an amalgamation brochure along with an introductory letter has gone out to all of Houselink's participants. An Outreach team of approximately 10 individuals, including peer workers, has been formed and is active. The Outreach team recommended an amalgamation poster and a poster is being produced. Helen and Brian have been meeting with all of Houselink's staff teams to communicate the benefits of amalgamation and provide an opportunity for clarification.

**Action:** Brian and Gautam to accompany the amalgamation agreement with a plain language document.

It was recommended that we engage all residents and consider a campaign style approach to make sure that those who will benefit the most from this initiative are well informed. It was also pointed out that members are more likely to speak freely when staff is not present.

It was unanimously agreed that Outreach is essential and that our participant board members have stepped up and have been fantastic leaders.

**Action:** Board members to pair up and conduct a "door-to-door" campaign prior to the vote.

We need to give more thought to the communication piece, but some key points to communicate include:

- reinforce our commitment to shift from shared accommodation in favour of individual accommodation/self-contained apartments
- Houselink wants to influence the sector in a way we cannot do individually
- we are 2 strong organizations and will be better together
- community programs will remain

This will be an extension of the targeted outreach already going on.

**Action:** Prior to the vote, Taylah will be given the board list and asked to co-ordinate this door-to-door effort by participant board members.

### **Confirm Revised Date for April Meeting**

The board agreed to hold the April board meeting on Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> with the Executive teleconference taking place a week before on Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>.

Helen asks to have the Support and Programs report done in May instead since it is a large report and based on the fiscal year ending March 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Board Vacancies / Attendance**

Unfortunately, despite many attempts during recent months to reach Esther, we have not been able to contact her. At the last Executive meeting, it was recommended that, if we still did not hear from Esther, the Board should make a motion to remove her on compassionate grounds, encouraging her to consider re-applying when she is feeling better. To do this, as per our by-laws, we need to invite her to the next meeting where we will have the motion to remove her.

**Motion** for Phillip Dufresne to send her a written invitation to the next board meeting and at that point, the board will vote to remove her on compassionate grounds.

Moved by: Richa Jagota

Seconded by: Linda McNeil

Carried

There is a second vacancy on the board and typically the Nominations Committee should be meeting soon. The Board can appoint someone for the remainder of the term if someone suitable comes forward, and they would have to run for election in June. Any new candidates would have to support all previous decisions by the Board including amalgamation.

**Motion** to begin outreach for 2 new board members, at least one resident member as per our by-laws.

Move by: Richa Jagota

Seconded by: Linda McNeil

Carried

### **Date and Theme for a Spring Retreat**

Although the retreat is on the workplan, this is a unique year due to the amalgamation work with Mainstay. There was full consensus that the retreat will be held post vote. Strategic questions may be asked post vote, and assuming we are moving forward with implementation, we may consider having a retreat with Mainstay.

### **Reviewing Agenda Item – Allotting Time at the End of Each Agenda for a Check-In**

After some discussion, a middle ground was reached. The in-camera check-in would remain on the agenda, but each night the board will decide if there is anything that needs to be discussed in-camera or just to adjourn the meeting, or have a check-in with staff present.

**In-Camera Check-In Motion**

Moved by: Steve Rogers

Seconded by: Colette Synder

Carried

**Action:** Discussed communications planning

**Out-of-Camera Motion**

Moved by: Richa Jagota

Seconded by: Carole King

Carried

**Adjournment**

Moved by: Joann Sochor

Seconded by: Charles Finlay

Carried

Minutes approved as presented



Phillip Dufresne, Chair

February 18, 2020

