

Syria - Antigonish Families Embrace (SAFE) Steering Committee - MINUTES

Wed, Jan 17, 2024, 6:30-8:45 PM

ECCU Meeting Room

Present: Mark, Jack, Anuj, Mike, Maria, Harry, Bronwen, Sheila, Karen (notes), Tim

1) Minutes and business arising from meeting December 12, 2023

Accepted; moved by Jack; 2nd Harry

Follow-up on action items

Action: The governance committee will work on a sponsorship MOU, which will help define roles between our SAH and SAFE and other CG's. Maria is gathering documents. Sheila and Anuj will help with the financial pieces of these kinds of documents. The MOU will reference our Code of Ethics.

Action: Bronwen will re-format the check-in documents to make them easier to read and to create a cumulative document.

Action: Training requirements for CG's. Bronwen will talk to Marla about this project. Planning for two 2 hr sessions with each group. Lucille, Peter and Bronwen setting up.

Action: Confidentiality Agreement: Mike to send out a revised version. We will discuss and vote next meeting.

Action: Maria proposed that she pull people into governance committee work as situations arise.

Action: Annual Vulnerable Sector Check has to be done every 3 years by board members, drivers, tutors, etc. Sue thinks better task for Steering Committee members. Decision: Bronwen will ask Sue to send Mark and updated volunteer list every month

Action: Bronwen will send a message to families about situation in Palestine. Anuj will assist. Karen will send Tatamagouche Centre letter as an example.

2) Financial report

Accepted: Sheila moved, Harry 2nd

Anuj taking over books as of Jan 31, and Harry stepping off as signing officer who are now Mark, Sheila and Anuj

Discussion around charging CG's \$450 for each refugee application. This would pay for our audit. Thought for the future.

3) BVOR update

Mark showed BVOR application list released Jan. 16. 37-yr-old woman from Afghanistan fits our criteria. In theory she could arrive within 6 weeks. SAFE pays start up and contingency and half the RAP payments; our contribution would be \$9,000 for the year. There are a total of 255 BVOR files for 2024. 15,000 application spots available for Private Sponsorship. We'll revisit this in a couple of months.

Action: Mark will follow up with government re woman with BVOR status in Afghanistan

4) Requests for SAFE sponsorships

SAFE-SAH number of possible sponsorships for 2024 is 25, with possibly 4 from 2023. SAFE is the only CG who is indicating we'd put in applications for 2025.

Discussed taking young family of 4 from Afghanistan now in Iran. Harry said that 4 would have to be filed in two applications: family of 3 and a single son. We have 22 requests from families already settled in the County. (see Harry's report)

Anuj argued we should let people in the broad refugee community know the number of spaces available for 2025. He suggested a small group develop criteria by which we will accept 25 sponsorship requests.

Action: Mike and Mark to meet to look at criteria by which applications will be assessed. E.g., contributions to sponsorship funds, RSTP courses taken, when ½ of expenses will be sent to SAFE

Bronwen will let families know that they can submit application until the end of February, and that we're developing selection criteria

5) New SC member and nominations

New Board member. Tim McCoy. Tim recently moved to Pomquet from Ontario where he and his wife Julie were involved in Matthew House, where refugees can stay for periods of time while they find more permanent homes. He is a Baptist Minister who served in senior church administration positions until his retirement. We are so pleased to have Tim on board.

Voted: Welcomed to the SC. Moved by Jack; 2nd Sheila

6) AGM planning

Nominations committee: Sheila and Jack (retiring B members).

We need to fill the big shoes left by Sheila and Jack.

AGM Planning team: Bronwen, Mike, Karen

Action: Bronwen will put out a general invitation to Syrian-Canadian community (Facebook)
Karen will organize meeting of the planning group

7) Meeting adjournment

Next meeting February 14, 4:30.