

**Syria-Antigonish Families Embrace
Steering Committee Meeting**

February 9, 2021
6:00-9:00 pm
Online

Present: Mark Ballard, Mary Ballard, Jack Beaton, Bronwen Cooke, Marla Gaudet, Hatem Ghouma, Lucille Harper, Sheila Sears, Othman Soufan, Peter Wade

Minutes

Agenda Item: Welcome to Othman Soufan

Discussion: Othman Soufan has joined the Steering Committee. We welcomed Othman to the Steering Committee and expressed our appreciation for his enthusiasm to begin work with SAFE.

Agenda Item: Minutes and Business Arising

Discussion: One correction noted regarding the meeting with Riyad Ibrahim—Lucille did not agree to be part of that meeting.

Actions:

Marla moved to accept the January 12, 2021 minutes with the above noted correction.

Seconded by Pete.

All in favour.

Agenda Item: Treasurer's Report

Discussion:

It was noted that the Board of Directors Insurance had not yet been paid out of the Contingency Fund.

Actions:

Sheila will check to see when the Board of Directors insurance was paid last year and if we should be expecting an invoice at this time.

Lucille will check to see if we need to inform the Board of Directors Insurance provider that there has been a change in the composition of the Steering Committee.

Sheila moved the adoption of the January financial report.

Seconded by Mark.

All in favour.

Agenda Item: Retention of Records

Discussion:

It is important that members of the Steering Committee carefully consider what SAFE records should be kept over time. Sheila keeps financial records for 7 years, as per CRA recommendations. Other documents that should be kept include: minutes and AGM documents; applications; regular quality assurance checklists performed with families. If anyone has families' bank records, health documents, or other personal information, then consideration should be put into whether those documents need to be kept. The SAH Association suggests keeping documents for 7 years.

Actions:

Sheila moved that Mark and Othman investigate setting up a secure electronic filing system and that when it is set up, and everyone understands how to use it, we will begin to migrate files to a shared storage unit.

Seconded by Hatem.

All in favour.

Agenda Item: Policies and Procedures

Discussion:

Code of Ethics: Sheila is working on a Code of Ethics.

Actions:

A policy is needed around the frequency of Criminal Record Checks.

Bronwen and Brenda Rose are working on a volunteer database that will include information about the Criminal Record Checks.

Agenda Item: Sponsorship Requests 2021—spaces confirmed

Discussion:

Ibrahim Balkis family of 2 (Alaa Hadhad): funds committed, application in progress

Pictou County Safe Harbour family of 6: no news at this time

CARE: 4 spaces allotted to sponsor two reunification requests: Gracia Mwamba's brother in Greece and Faida Fiki's fiancé and 2 children in East Congo.

Agenda Item: Sponsorship Requests—for reference to spaces for 2021

Discussion:

SAFE has just received a request from Alaa Abo Alhawa for a family of 8.

Actions:

We will consider the Abo Alhawa request at our next meeting.

Agenda Item: Changes in Composition of Families with Submitted Application

Discussion:

If a CG agrees to sponsor a family and submits an application, what happens if the composition of the family changes. Who is responsible for taking on the additional costs? Is this clear on the request form that CGs fill out for our review?

Actions:

Lucille will review the CG request form to make sure that it is clear that the CG is responsible for covering any additional costs related to the addition of family members.

Agenda Item: Ghentawi/Altaieb Family Update

Discussion:

For a variety of reasons, SAFE is providing more support to the Ghentawi and Altaieb families than we had originally planned for, including significant translation services. Marla and Bronwen completed the Month 3 checklist with each of the families. The families are starting to feel settled. They identified some areas where we can provide more support. Members of The Antigonish Muslim Association has offered to help with transportation for both families.

Agenda Item: SAFE Model and January 20 Meeting with Lena Diab

Discussion:

Labour and Advanced Education wants to put SAFE more in touch with NS Works to access the supports they have available.

Missing from the discussion was: EAL for adults, training through community college, EAL supports in the schools.

The Steering Committee had a short discussion about the merits and drawbacks of English classes being composed of both men and women.

Actions:

A follow up meeting is being planned for Feb 16 to discuss EAL for children in grades Primary to 12.

A follow up meeting with ISANS on Feb 17 will discuss what ISANS is able to offer in terms of employment supports, EAL supports, etc.

Agenda Item: SSHRC Project

Discussion:

Jack had nothing to report.

Norine has contacted Lucille about a Run/Walk for refugees that will be overseen by the Mitacs interns and SAFE. More details to follow.

Agenda Item: Annual General Meeting, March 2021

Discussion:

Jack is putting together a Nomination Committee Report. Othman's membership will be approved. Renewal of Sheila's, Marla's and Jack's membership will be approved. A call to the general membership for nominations will then lead to a vote. It will ease the process if we know ahead of time if other nominations have come forward and, therefore, if a vote is needed.

An amendment to the Bi-laws, indicating that Steering Committee members serve a 3 year term, will need to be approved.

Sheila will outline the Financial Review.

We will require 6 people from the general membership to achieve a quorum.

Actions:

Lucille will put out a summary of nominations and a request for nominations.

It was decided that we will not have a speaker, this will be a business meeting only.

Please send Lucille committee reports to be included in the annual report.

Lucille will send out a notice to membership.

Hatem will set up a Google Meet session and will share the link with Lucille for distribution.

Agenda Item: Municipality of County of Antigonish Community Partnership grant for 2021.

Actions:

Mark, Mary, Marla and Othman will work together around an entrepreneurship project.

Agenda Item: IRCC Call for Proposals: Capacity Building for Private Sponsorship of Refugees

Discussion:

After reviewing the CFP, the funding does not meet the needs of SAFE at this time.

Agenda Item: Tri-Heart

Actions:

Lucille will follow up with Harry about the status of Tri-Heart to determine if the group plans to continue being active.

Agenda Item: Next Meeting

AGM: March 9, 2021

The Steering Committee will meet immediately after the AGM.
