

**Director of Administration, Beth Ponka  
Board of Directors Report  
November 25, 2018**

**Financial**

I received a number of quotes for group benefits. After careful review, we have chosen to go with Sun Life through a Certified Health Insurance Specialist, Jed Ziegler. Jed will be able to provide support to staff as part of his services, which should alleviate some of the administrative burden on our office. Jed met with each staff member to enroll them in the new program and delivered the new group benefits booklets to our office. He has been really helpful.

Our clinic has been asked to act as Treasurer for the Legal Clinic's Housing Issues Committee, with an annual budget of \$1,700. This was dealt with at the last Board meeting.

There had been concern that we may not be able to proceed with the Northern Regional Training event that we hosted in November for the 11 northern legal clinics. However, that was resolved and we were able to host the event at the Valhalla Inn at the beginning of November.

At the AGM, MNP was confirmed as the clinic's auditor again, for the next three year term, commencing with 2019/20.

The Salary Committee will schedule a meeting so that salaries for the current fiscal year can be set. We have not received any new information on LAO's compensation review.

Our \$100,000 term deposit has been re-invested with CIBC for a one year term at 2.5%.

All mandatory remittances for staff wages have been made.

**Administration**

The Marathon office has moved into their new location. It is in the same office complex but much larger and includes a board room, kitchen facilities, and a separate office for community partners, such as Legal Aid Ontario.

We received the draft report from the LAO internal auditors and have provided responses to their recommendations, which the Board will be reviewing today.

Our Geraldton and Thunder Bay offices have received updated computers and laptops. Our internet connection in Thunder Bay has also been upgraded for faster performance. The Marathon office computers will be updated the week of December 17.

We received notice that the space above our office at 86 S. Cumberland Street (previously occupied by NALSC), is available and we have the first right of refusal. We had requested this consideration during the last negotiation of our lease, as we knew that we were running out of space. However, we undertook renovations in our Thunder Bay office to convert the file storage room into three new workstations and we previously had given notice to HRLSC so that we could also use that office space. Our office renovations for the Thunder Bay office are complete and we do not need additional space at this time.

The ACMs were generally well-attended in September and the AGM was successful, with an inspirational keynote address by Sandi Boucher.

The Anishnaabek Christmas party will be held on Friday night, December 14, at the Slovak Legion. Everyone is welcome, along with a guest.

The office will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, December 21, 2018, and will re-open on Wednesday, January 2, 2019.

We are continuing to incorporate CIMS into our daily work and are becoming more proficient. However, extracting reports continues to be a challenge – although we are getting better and we are able to extract more information than before.

We will be mailing out copies of our annual reports with our Christmas greetings.

### **Personnel**

We are planning a retirement Open House for Rick Atkinson on Friday, December 14, 1 – 4 p.m., here at the legal clinic. Everyone is invite to attend.

We will be offering a six-month contract to both Larissa Speak and Caycie Soke, until the end of May 2019.

Sherry Abotossaway joined us in September as an IPC student from the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law. She will be on placement with our office until the middle of December.

We have two first-year law students working in our office with our ID services program, through Pro Bono Students Canada: Erin Chocla and Justis Danto-Clancy. They will be with us for the remainder of the academic year.

Several of our female staff attended Cheyanne is working part-time as Operations Assistant. In the new fiscal year, we will look at making this a full-time, permanent position.

Chantal Walterson had knee surgery on November 6 and will be off for several weeks.

### **Training**

Our clinic staff organized, hosted, and attended the Northern Clinic's Regional Training conference at the Valhalla Inn, November 5 – 8. There were numerous sessions on a variety of topics relevant to the practice of poverty law. Tracey was instrumental in organizing the session. Cindy set up registration using Event Brite, which is our first time using an online registration system for the training program.

We held an in-person tinternal raining session for all staff that included an accredited session from the ACLCO Practice Dialogue series on dealing with difficult clients. We also had a wellness session where staff made medicine bags while we viewed short videos on the four sacred medicines.

Our clinic has partnered with the southwest region of community legal clinics on a Gladue Pilot Project. Hollee George, a Gladue writer and trainer, will be coming to Thunder Bay in the new year to provide training on applying Gladue principles at administrative tribunals.

Tony Riccio, a former SBT adjudicator whose 10 year term was not extended, is now working as a community and patient advocate for the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office. He came to our office to talk to us about the services their office provides and his new role there.

There are an increasing number of professional development opportunities by webinar. Staff recently participated in an ACLCO webinar on the *Fundamentals of the Clinic System*.

**Board**

We welcomed Jamie McGinnis to the Board of Directors at the Thunder Bay Area Community Meeting in September.

Alta has joined the NRTP Steering Committee as well as the Advocacy North Elder and Senior Law Project advisory committee. The NRTPSC is comprised of the directors and a board member from each of the 11 legal clinics in the north. The committee meets a few times each year, to provide direction to the Northern Region Transformation Project, aka Advocacy North. The NRTPSC had an in-person meeting in November in Thunder Bay, which was scheduled to coincide with the training conference for the 11 northern legal clinics.

We were shocked to be asked by KZA's band manager, Beth Boon, not to travel to their community any more to provide services. They are upset with some of the services that we have been providing to some of the residents of the community. Chief King and Beth Boon will be meeting with us at our meeting on Sunday, November 25, to discuss this in more depth.

**Legal Aid Ontario**

David Field, CEO, has announced a restructuring of LAO that will see a new Clinic Law Services Division (re)established. Jayne Mallin, who is a former E.D. at a legal clinic and worked at LAO on the Transformation Projects, will be the VP with this new responsibility. Jayne attended our recent NRT session here in Thunder Bay. She visited our office while she was here and attended the Executive Director's meeting at NRT as well as a number of the sessions. There will be new staff, many of whom we have not worked with before and who will have a steep learning curve. Nevertheless, this is a positive development for clinics and will hopefully result in a stronger clinic system throughout the province.

**Community Development/Outreach**

Angie, the Advocacy North Speakers' School and Peer Support Organizer, has been organizing events to protest the cancellation of the Basic Income Pilot Project and to protest the changes to social assistance. She is organizing an event called InTentCity for this Tuesday, November 27 at 11 a.m. at City Hall.

The ID services team met with the evaluators and the representative from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. An interim report is due to the funders in January. Fabienne has been super busy helping clients access ID services and providing leadership at the ID Action Group. She organized an ID clinic earlier this month in partnership with Northwest Community Health Centre and our Pro Bono Students.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Ponka