



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

October 9, 2018

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH: During this past reporting period, I attended Resource Roundup and the Central NH Foster/Adoptive Support group meeting. My goal was to share with each group information regarding the change in leadership with the association, give some history regarding the association's governance, and provided opportunity to ask questions. Overall, those that heard the explanation appeared to understand the issues and wanted to know what the organization would be doing to rebuild the board. One individual stated she felt NHFAPA should attempt to engage on Facebook as members were only getting one side of the story. I answered that NHFAPA would be making a better effort to communicate with its membership through email correspondence as well as attending local support group meetings where we were invited.

INTERNATIONAL VISITOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM: On Friday, October 5, 2018, NHFAPA was invited to be a guest speaker to a group of professionals from the Philippines. The program is sponsored by Southern New Hampshire University and is funded through the US Department of State. The visitors were professionals who worked with youth in conflict with the law and they were here to learn about our juvenile justice system. Part of the experience including learning about foster care and adoption. I was able to share with the group my personal experience of fostering youth involved with juvenile justice and the requirements for licensing. The Philippines currently does not have formal, regulated foster care and they are working to develop legislation and regulations to create a foster care system. The guests included attorneys, a psychologist, a judge, and several directors from various youth programs. The invitation to speak came in through the website when the World Affairs Council found NHFAPA's website while looking for information on line regarding foster care and adoption.

CLIF GRANT UPDATE: I have contacted Jana Brown regarding the grant and through out discussion determined the north country was currently adequately served by the CLiF through various programs. When I contacted the Berlin children's librarian to share we had selected another area of the state, she agreed that the north country did have access to many programs. Jana Brown and I discussed holding the event in the Rochester/Somersworth/Dover area and she believed that was an underserved area. Ms. Brown stated the event should be scheduled for an afternoon during the weekday and they would like at least 30 people in attendance. I have selected about 150 books for NHFAPA to distribute. We'll look at scheduling an event some time mid-November.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: During the golf tournament, a representative from Red Arrow Diner approached NHFAPA regarding the opportunity to connect with state-wide businesses to receive funds through the legalized KENO gaming in New Hampshire. According to this individual, businesses "adopt" various nonprofits to be the recipients of proceeds from KENO games. Our understanding is the business submits the "charity" to the State of New Hampshire as the beneficiary of the gaming through a certain period of time, the proceeds are collected and then distributed to the nonprofit with no out-of-pocket costs to the nonprofit. This practice is legal and recognized by many nonprofits as a method to secure discretionary (unrestricted) funds. The board would need to review all the details and decide whether this would be an appropriate method to raise additional funds.

MEETING REVIEWS: During this reporting period, I attended two meetings and provided a written summary of those meetings. I am including the written summaries for our new board members and to remind the board of the content of those meetings.

SCORE MEETING:

To say that this past month has been an absolute whirlwind is an understatement. Emotions are running high, as is understandable given the circumstances. I met with two mentors from SCORE this afternoon and received advice and counsel. We spoke for about 1 ½ hours, and both seem genuinely interested in helping our board and our association get back on track. I want to summarize the discussion and the imperatives they've identified and provide some clarity to what the next steps should be. I will list them in priority we identified in our meeting.

1. Identify who will be the primary voice for the association. The mentors recommended that voice-the public face should be the President and the ED. The board should then adopt a policy that no one else communicate on behalf of the board, both publicly and privately, unless sanctioned by the President and/or ED.
2. Build the Board- we need to identify one or two new board members ASAP. One suggestion is to look at either past board members or adoptive parents who may have older children and are not fostering. The mentor's reasoning is that foster parents currently fostering may be more inclined to be connected to the emotional "hostile" group. They asserted the new board members should be identified in the next week or two...max.
3. Once the new board members have been appointed, the mentors would volunteer to help facilitate/attend a board retreat to help us get back on track and develop a plan to focus the board on tasks to improve the cohesiveness of the group.
4. If Jen Padilla does not officially resign, she can be deposed on the grounds that she has missed three meetings in a row (she missed 8/14, 8/31, and 9/11). The mentors recommend that this be taken care of after new members are appointed. The concern about removing Jen P. prior to appointment new members is, in part, to satisfy the quorum requirement of our bylaws. Jen's continued participation (or lack thereof) needs to be addressed once the board is "beefed up."
5. The mentors recommend that we not do any sort of town hall until we have a cohesive board. They did strongly recommend that we have our board "act" together prior to 10/13 (the conference).
6. The two mentors coached me/us not to engage in the FB fracas. They suggest we build our page on FB and keep it to strictly informational. They went so far as to tell me all board members should unfollow/remove themselves from the "poisoned" FB page. If the hijacked page uses our name or logo, then we must bring legal action-if they rename it...leave it alone and move on.
7. We did discuss the idea of appointing me to the board and both agreed that opens us up for more scrutiny and issues of conflict of interest. They articulated I can be more useful in the role of ED and note as a board member.

The two mentors emphasized they felt we could recover from this and that they can play a role in assisting us get on track, and they agree that our biggest challenge is to develop a high functioning board that understands appropriate board governance, creates a shared vision, and can promote the mission of the organization. I agree with them and look forward to their guidance and sharing of their expertise to help get us through this current phase of the board and the association.

Please let me know what questions you may have. We'll need to set up a board meeting/retreat soon per the advice of Guy and Dave.

DCYF MEETING OCTOBER 1, 2018:

The meeting with DCYF included Kathy Companion and Kara Buxton. Our meeting took place at the Thayer building for approximately two hours. Kara and Kathy both expressed a concern that New Hampshire Foster and Adoptive Parent Association would be unable to recover from the public debacle of August and September 2018. Below is a review of the highlights of the meeting.

1. We briefly reviewed the events that led to the resignation/unseating of the president. Kathy Companion believed some of the events that led to the decision were related to the way money was spent, the restriction she placed on the ED to communicate with Wendy's, and the invitation for the Governor to speak at her local support group. I clarified the main reason the board moved to depose Ms. Sullivan from the position of president was related to her unwillingness to meet with the board and her inaction to develop an effective plan to mitigate the dissent with the members, particularly in the southern part of the state. I did share that at one point, prior to the board deciding to unseat Ms. Sullivan, that the remaining board members and I had drafted letters of resignation. We changed our decision as not to abandon the funds graciously donated to the association as we were convinced leaving would put those funds in a precarious position with Ms. Sullivan and her "friends" at the helm.
2. We discussed how the events played out on Facebook and how we had made the decision not to respond on social media. Kara agreed that putting things on Facebook would not be helpful. I shared that we were planning to send out weekly communication via email and would manage a FB informational page.
3. I shared that the FIRST LINE phone is still in the possession of Ms. Sullivan and repeated attempts to have the phone surrendered to NHFAPA have failed. Kara volunteered to speak with Ms. Sullivan to encourage her to surrender the phone. I relayed the information that we had received notice that all correspondence was to go through Ms. Sullivan's attorney. After some discussion, Kathy and Kara agreed that NHFAPA was not responsible for maintaining an emergency response phone. They discussed the possibility of allocating some funds in the future in an RFP to have an agency, perhaps Wediko or Child and Family Services, take on the FIRST line. Kathy expressed a very limited concern about changing the phone number and stated it was not a burden to change the published number. Both suggested we discontinue paying for the phone immediately as it remains in Ms. Sullivan's possession.
4. Kathy questioned the decision to appoint new members to the board regardless of the provision in the Association's bylaws. She stated she felt the membership would have more "buy-in" if we advertised for members and then had a full membership vote. I explained that time was of the essence and that we needed to build the board a bit more strategically. She questioned the fact that it appeared we had been "self-appointing" and did not hold any elections. I explained elections had taken place this spring and the

process included the Nomination Committee vetting candidates that were put up to a general membership vote. Kathy pressed the point repeatedly that members should be voted on by popular vote. I shared that we had about 49 people out of a possible 700 +/- eligible members vote this past Spring. She expressed surprise at that turnout, as I pointed out the year prior we only received a couple of votes. She agreed that was typical. I then questioned, with that sort of a “voter turnout,” how could that possibly be an effective method to build a strong board.

5. I shared the write up regarding the imperatives the SCORE mentors identified and we discussed the mentor’s role in assisting NHFAPA rebuild the board. We discussed the process of strategic planning, and Kathy appeared a bit confused by what strategic planning was and what it was not. She identified the Saturday meeting in November 2016 as a strategic planning session. I clarified that the event in question was merely an opportunity for board members to review and understand fiduciary responsibility and at no point did that meeting constitute a strategic planning session.
6. I expressed concern regarding the elimination of the NHFAPA logo off the hats for the NHFAPA conference. Kathy stated when she saw the logo, she had a “personal” reaction and in no way did her personal reaction reflect her professional one. She stated she did question the logo, citing that it may anger and incite people at the conference and she didn’t want anyone to “take the hats home and burn them.” She and Kara made it clear DCYF would remain neutral and that those instructions came from higher up the organizational ladder. I questioned whether the conference was or was not a NHFAPA event-Kathy stated it was a NHFAPA event...this year. I then pointed out removing the logo from a give-away at a NHFAPA conference because of fear it would upset people was, in fact, taking a side. Kathy reiterated it was a personal comment not a professional one. I kindly pointed out that her personal comment was rendered at her workplace, at DCYF, and could be interpreted as her “professional” opinion. Kara agreed with me and stated she did not think angry foster parents will have any interest in attending the conference. I agreed.
7. I did ask for feedback on possible board members and Kathy shared a few ideas. She believes Charity Bell would be a good fit. I explained Charity had been one of the more venomous individuals on Facebook. She found that difficult to comprehend as she felt Charity was neutral. She did suggest the Desmaries’s, Adam Steele, Sheila Knapp. I shared we were approaching Kim Hennessey and Mariellen MacKay.
8. At the end of the meeting, Kara stated she was confident we would recover from this event, which was a complete shift from what she had shared two hours prior. Kathy agreed to let us know if she thought of individuals who may be good candidates for the board.

Respectfully submitted,

Bobbie Gaudette

Executive Director

New Hampshire Foster and Adoptive Parent Association