



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2025 – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

March 19, 2025 – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Head Office Boardroom/MS Teams

Attendees: Mel Norton (Chairperson), Jason Green, Mike MacMullin, Jim Stanley, Chantal LaFleur, Gaetan Guerette, Denny Vautour, Adam Donnelly, Tim Petersen (President & CEO)

Regrets: Adam Donnelly (March 19, 2025)

Staff Present for the Meeting: Lee Bell-Smith (General Counsel & Corporate Secretary), Carolyn MacDonald (Vice-President of Strategy & Finance), Laragh Dooley (Vice-President of People & Culture), Lisa Walker (Chief Information Officer), Dr. Paul Atkinson (Chief Medical Officer), Michael Freeze (Controller), Matthew Hachey (Legal Counsel), Carol Veysey (Director of Policy & Hearing Representation), Courtney St. Peter (Board Liaison)

Guest: Tasha Salesse (NB Federation of Labour) (Item 14)

1. Adoption of Agenda -

The Board of Directors reviewed the agenda for the meeting March 18 – 19, 2025 as provided in the meeting materials.

On motion, duly made, and seconded it was unanimously resolved:

That the Board of Directors adopt the agenda dated March 18 – 19, 2025 as presented.

2. Safety Moment

The Board of Directors discussed the increasing number of potholes and ongoing construction work, urging caution when driving through construction zones, especially with oncoming traffic.

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The Chairperson asked if any Members had a Conflict of Interest. No conflicts were declared.

4. Approval of Minutes dated December 11th & 12th, 2024

The Board of Directors reviewed the minutes of the Board meeting dated December 11 – 12, 2024 as provided in the meeting materials.

One Member indicated that a word seems to be missing on page 4 of the minutes. The Board Liaison indicated that would be corrected.

On motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved:

That the Board of Directors approve the minutes of the meeting dated December 11 – 12, 2024 as amended.

5. Consent Agenda

a. 2024 Workplan

The Board of Directors reviewed the 2025 Workplan as provided in the meeting materials.

On motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved:

That the Board of Directors receive the 2025 Workplan for information.

b. Mandate Letter Update

The Board of Directors reviewed the Mandate Letter update as provided in the meeting materials.

On motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved:

That the Board of Directors receive the Mandate Letter update for information.

6. Policies

a. Home Modification

The Director of Policy & Hearing Representation gave the Board an overview of the proposed changes in the home modification policy as provided in the meeting materials. She made note that there were no changes to the compensation or benefits.

One Member asked for clarification if a client had sold their home and bought a new one, if they would qualify for modifications again. Ms. Vessey indicated that it is generally a one-time modification. The Member raised a legal concern that one cannot be bound to one's home if there is a significant reason for a move. The Vice-President of Strategy & Finance indicated that while WorkSafeNB doesn't often encounter this issue, it would be determined on a case-by-case basis. Legal Counsel indicated that circumstances would need to be considered but WorkSafeNB won't continually re-build homes per client.

One Member raised concerns about changes in policy language, specifically the removal of definitions for "prolong" and "severe," and the lack of a clear definition for "significant." They also indicated concerned about the exclusion of family rooms in housing modifications, which they considered essential. Additionally, they questioned what would happen if temporary living arrangements extended beyond cost or time expectations.

Ms. Vessey clarified that the term "severe" was replaced with "significant" to shift away from a negative connotation and focus on long-term disability and the importance of returning to work. She said that the family living room was excluded because it typically is one of the rooms that has no accessibility issues at all. Lastly, she clarified that a cap is in place in alignment with the Income Tax Act, and all policy elements qualify as medical expenses.

On motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:

The Board of Directors approve Policy 21-403 Home Modifications to Assist with Functional Access release 6 and rescind Policy 21-403 Home Modifications to Assist with Functional Access release 5.

7. Governance, People & Culture Committee Update

a. Chairperson's Report of Committee Meeting dated February 25th, 2025

The Committee Chair of the Governance, People & Culture Committee gave the Board an overview of their report from the meeting held on February 25th, 2025, as provided in the meeting materials.

On motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:

The Board of Directors receive the Governance, People & Culture Committee Chair report for information.

b. Policy 41-012 Governance – Balancing Decision

The Board reviewed the recommended changes in Policy 41-012 Governance – Balancing Decision as provided in the meeting materials.

On motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:

The Board approve Policy 41-012 Governance - Balancing Decisions release 4 and rescind Policy 41-012 Governance - Balancing Decisions release 3.

c. Policy 41-004 Governance – Policy Development

The Board reviewed the recommended changes in Policy 41-004 Governance – Policy Development as provided in the meeting materials.

On motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:
The Board approve Policy 41-004 Governance – Policy Development release 5 and rescind Policy 41-004 Governance – Policy Development release 4.

d. New Memo – Board Compensation

The Committee Chair gave the Board an overview of the board compensation discussion that was had at the Governance, People & Culture Committee. He indicated that the Committee was happy to recommend an increase in per-diem amount from \$200 to \$500. The Committee Chair also indicated that the Committee members wanted to have a full Board discussion on providing an annual salary to the board chairperson.

The Vice-President of Strategy & Finance indicated that typically other jurisdictions provide the Board Chair a salary in addition to the per-diems and it ranges anywhere from \$13k - \$30k. Members agreed with the idea of providing the chair a salary to keep up with retention and talent. The Committee Chair indicated that the Board Chair role comes with significant responsibility and believes it to be important.

One Member suggested calling it an honorarium rather than a salary and the Board agreed. The President & CEO said that this will need to be recommended to government but the last time there was an order in council for per-diem rates was in 1994. Members agreed to an annual honorarium of \$20k.

On motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:
The Board Directors recommend to the Department of Post Secondary Education, Training & Labour an increase in per-diem rate to \$500 as well as an annual honorarium of \$20k for the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

e. Employer Recruitment

i. KBRS Proposal

One Member indicated that it should be noted that for an employer or worker representative there needs to be a nomination from a stakeholder group. The Board Liaison agreed with the member and indicated she will communicate that with the KBRS team.

One motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:

The Board approve the KBRS recruitment proposal for their facilitation of the employer recruitment process.

ii. Interview Committee

The Committee Chair indicated to the Board the Members who expressed interest in serving on the Interview Committee was:

Adam Donnelly – Committee Chair
Gaetan Guerette – Voting Member
Jason Green – Voting Member

Members asked for an update on the vice-chair recruitment process. The

President & CEO indicated that last he heard was that the recommendation was ready to be heard at cabinet and WorkSafeNB should have an appointment soon.

One motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:

The Board approve the Interview Committee for the employment recruitment process as Adam Donnelly (Committee Chair), Gaetan Guerette (Voting member); and Jason Green (Voting Member)

f. Governance, People & Culture Committee Trial Period Review

The Committee Chair indicated to the Board that the Committee agreed that the merged committee has been functioning well and should continue as a regular committee of the Board rather than a trial committee.

One Committee member indicated that he agreed with the Committee chair, each meeting has been efficient with ample time to fully review each item.

One motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:

The Board approve the continuation of the Governance, People & Culture Committee.

The Committee Chair also provided a brief update to the Board regarding in-person meeting expectations and said that the Committee discussed that members should aim to participate in board meeting in-person. He indicated that there would be exceptions, but that Members should treat the expectation reasonably. One Member indicated the expectation should be included in the orientation package as well.

8. Audit Committee Update

a. Chairperson's Report of Committee Meeting dated February 26th, 2025

The Committee Chair gave the Board an overview of their report from the meeting held on February 26th, 2025 as provided in the meeting materials.

The Chair indicated that the committee had a discussion on a whistle blower approach and asked management to poll the WorkSafeNB staff to get an understanding for what would be most comfortable for them.

The President & CEO reminded the Board that management previously committed to engaging external advice on the modernization reporting and whether a committee would be effective for the Board. He said that an individual will be coming from Linea Solution and will be setting up calls with certain Board Members.

On motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:

The Board receive the Audit Committee Chairperson's report for the meeting of February 26th, 2025 for information.

b. Policy 45-002 Business Continuity Management

The Board reviewed the recommended changes in policy 42-002 Business Continuity Management as provided in the meeting materials.

On motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:

The Board approve Policy 45-002 Business Continuity, release 4, and rescind Policy 45-002 Business Continuity, release 3.

9. Finance & Investment committee Update

a. Chairperson's Report of Committee Meeting dated February 27th, 2025

The Committee Chair gave the Board an overview of their report from the meeting held on February 27th, 2025 as provided in the meeting materials. He indicated that it took a while to get through everything but thanked the Committee and staff for the in-depth conversation and was impressed with experts within the organization and knowledge they bring to the Committee.

One Member indicated that on the agenda the policy number is wrong and the Board Liaison acknowledged this.

On motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:
The Board receive the Finance & Investment Committee Chairperson's report for the meeting of February 27th, 2025 for information.

b. Policy 34-200 Investment Goals & Objectives

The Board reviewed the recommended changes in Policy 34-200 Investment Goals & Objectives as provided in the Board materials.

On motion duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:
The Board approve Policy 34-200 Investment Goals, release 19, and rescind Policy 34-200 Investment Goals, release 18.

c. New Memo – Finance Results

The Committee Chair gave the Board an update on the 2024 preliminary unaudited financial results as provided in the meeting materials.

On motion, duly made, seconded and carried it was unanimously resolved that:
The Board approve the \$979k from the variance to the Modernization fund.

10. Gradual Onset Stress

The Director of Policy & Hearing Representation gave the Board an overview of the current research found on gradual onset stress as provided in the meeting materials.

One Member asked about the conditions needed to conduct a charter challenge. Legal Counsel noted that the legislation may be discriminatory but strong evidence is required. A Member clarified that the supreme court does not typically weigh in on fact based cases unless it's a class action. Mr. Hachey mentioned that in New Brunswick it has largely been worker advocates rather than legal counsel pushing such matters forward.

Ms. Veysey reported that in Alberta and British Columbia they have approved 134 gradual/chronic while 1024 claims were denied. The Board discussed how traumatic events and onset stress are handled and Ms. Veysey indicated that New Brunswick's current standards are narrow. One Member pointed out that the lack of past debriefings might exclude many healthcare workers.

One member emphasized the need for legislative support and proper education on workplace situations. The Member supported the idea of setting up an entitlement co-ordinator to guide the process, learning from challenges faced by WorkSafeNB's counterparts.

A Member noted that bullying and harassment can often stem from gradual onset stress. The Board stressed the need to properly roll out any new approach. Ms. Veysey acknowledged that many past claims have been denied due to system limitations and there is a need to better capture grey area cases.

The Vice-President of Strategy & Finance indicated that staff's goal is to align this consultation to fit within the same timeline that the legislative review is due to the Minister. The President & CEO

indicated that this topic would come back to the full Board either in Q3 or Q4 to begin consultations.

11. Annual Planning Risk & Assessment

The Vice-President of Strategy & Finance gave the committee an overview of the annual planning and risk assessment as provided in the meeting materials.

A Member raised concern about the possible supply chain issue, questioning whether risk may be more severe under the new U.S. administration. Ms. MacDonald indicated that the organization's supply chain needs are not currently impacted by the tariffs. The President & CEO added that while access to materials remains stable, costs are significantly increasing.

A Member expressed concern about the human impact of modernization, noting how complex and potentially disruptive it can be for employees. Mr. Petersen responded that while change is inherently challenging, the organization is not moving at a pace to overwhelm staff. He emphasized that leaders are being equipped with tools and training to support their teams through the transitions. While some employees may be struggling, support systems are in place to ease the process as much as possible.

A Member asked for clarification on whether the risk register captures all organizational risks or those at a high level. The President & CEO indicated that the presented registry reflects only strategic-level risk and that a much more detailed operational risk registry exists beneath it.

A Member referenced a recent comment by the Premier suggesting a halt to contracts with the U.S. and asked whether this poses a risk to the organization. The President & CEO stated that there is no immediate impact, though WorkSafeNB will soon go to market for a new claims system, which could present procurement challenges. He also noted that non-essential U.S. travel is currently not being approved. Another Member raised reputational concerns if government messaging shifts toward discouraging U.S. contracts. Mr. Petersen responded that any direction from government would likely be advisory rather than restrictive and would aim to support stakeholders while allowing business operations to continue. He emphasized the importance of not reacting hastily to political statements and noted that a significant portion of WorkSafeNB's investment portfolio is in the U.S.

On motion, duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:
The Board receive the annual planning risk and assessments update for information.

12. Welcome & Continue Agenda

The Chair provided welcome back remarks and resumed the Board meeting.

13. President & CEO Accountability Report

The President & CEO gave the Board an overview of his accountability report as provided in the meeting materials.

One Member asked for a specific example of an injury where a missed opportunity for timely support could impact recovery. The President & CEO responded with serious injuries such as spinal cord and amputations, emphasizing the importance of timely intervention in those cases.

A Member raised concern about the time to first decision and first payment noting WorkSafeNB appears to be falling behind. Mr. Petersen agreed that the organization is off the mark. The Member followed up by asking if the delay is a result of the modernization efforts. Mr. Petersen responded that while the modernization may play a role, he believes the large issue is the over processing claims, questioning whether the organization is gathering more information than necessary to make initial decisions.

The President & CEO suggested looking into the concept of a bridge payment, an interim payment that could issue earlier in the process. He noted that if the average time to first payment is 35 days, that means many claimants are going too long without income. He proposed exploring mechanisms to get payment out on day one where appropriate and possible.

A Member emphasized the importance of recognizing *prima facie* claims specifically in cases where the injury and workplace connection are clear. They noted that part of the challenge is in the information-gathering phase, especially as many physicians transition to online systems. The Vice-President of Strategy & Finance agreed, stating that digitizing incoming information remains one of the organization's biggest pain points. She suggested that if mandatory fields could be implemented for digital submissions, it would significantly improve the intake process.

On motion, duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:
The Board receive the President & CEO's accountability report for information.

14. Stakeholder Presentation – New Brunswick Federation of Labour

Tasha Salesse provided the Board a presentation on the New Brunswick Federation of Labour Women's Committee and the efforts at New Brunswick Federation of Labour ("the Federation").

One Member noted the limited availability to help with intimate partner violence and clarified that what the Federation is advocating for is when people are in the workplace, they are safe and provided with help and education when they are not within the office. Ms. Salesse agreed and indicated that a safety plan is essential.

A Member note that a reason a nurse may not fill out an incident report at work is due to the max earning, it is not financially worth it, and they end up using their LTD.

The Board discussed joint occupational health & safety ("JOSH") committees and asked Ms. Salesse if in her opinion JOSH committees around New Brunswick are working. Ms. Salesse responded that not particularly in private business' and noted that often employers see these committee t and meetings as a check box. She indicated that it could be a great area to explore and provide the education on why these committees are needed.

The Chairperson asked when discussing the presented issues across the country if the Federation sees any issues where other provinces are leading. Ms. Salesse indicated that currently Ontario is leading when it comes to feminine hygiene products available at work.

The Vice-President of People & Culture indicated that WorkSafeNB, at one time, was partnered with several consultants and determined that this was beneficial to employees. She noted that WorkSafeNB tried to push that onto other organizations and that it may make sense to revisit that conversation.

On motion, duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:
The Board receive the presentation from the New Brunswick Federation of Labour for information.

15. Presumptive cancers under Firefighters' Compensation Act

The President & CEO began the discussion with the Board on the presumptive cancers under the Firefighter's Compensation Act and he noted that while New Brunswick may appear to be an outlier among provinces, this does not reflect a lack of diligence.

The Chief Medical Officer raised concern about the insufficient evidence related to certain cancers and emphasized the lack of clarity on factors such as age, career versus volunteer status, and family history. He noted that the decisions in other jurisdictions have similarly not been based strictly on strong medical evidence.

One member stressed the importance of understanding the Board's scope before determining coverage eligibility and recommended that technical decisions be guided by expert advice. Other Members expressed concern over whether firefighters across jurisdictions have had the same level of training or access to personal protective equipment, which affects exposure risks and outcomes.

One Member emphasized the need for clarity on whether the Board is moving towards merging compensation acts or maintaining separate ones. They expressed discomfort with proceeding without this direction.

One member asked if it would be possible to schedule a special Board meeting to have this item as the only topic to allow for a full discussion. The Board agreed and the President & CEO indicated that management would canvas the Board for a 3-hour special meeting where the act merger and presumptive cancers would be the main topic.

On motion, duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:
The Board receive the presumptive cancers under Firefighters' Compensation Act for information.

16. Modernization

a. Quarterly Progress Report

The Vice-President of People & Culture gave the Board a quarterly update on the modernization efforts as provided in the meeting materials.

On motion, duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:
The Board receive the quarterly modernization report for information.

b. Progress Report Template Proposed by Internal Audit

The Vice-President of People & Culture gave the Board an overview of the proposed progress report template from the internal audit of modernization reporting as provided in the meeting materials.

The Board agreed to keep the portfolio risks maintained and agreed to having the Integrated Project Plan slide changed to internal Audit's suggestion.

On motion, duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:
The Board receive the progress report template proposed by internal audit for information.

c. Project Update: Finance & HR system

The Vice-President of People & Culture and Chief Information Officer gave the Board a presentation on the progress of the implementation of the Finance & HR systems as provided in the meeting materials.

On motion, duly made, seconded, and carried it was unanimously resolved that:
The Board receive the project update on the Finance & HR systems for information.

17. New Business

No New Business.

18. In-camera

An in-camera session was held.

Adjourned

Motion (and seconded) to adjourn at 4:08 p.m. on March 19th, 2025.