

**DRAFT Minutes of EDSS Annual General Meeting**  
**Thursday, October 1, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.**  
**In-person and Zoom Meeting (Recorded)**

**Present:** Jane Jess, Chair  
Tomek Wala, Vice-Chair via Zoom  
Elia Damis, Secretary (Steering Committee Chair) via Zoom  
Lucia Stachurski, Treasurer  
Jennifer Cassidy, Director via Zoom  
Mabel Tu (Steering Committee) via Zoom

**Ex-Officio** Alan Clay, Executive Director

**Staff:** Julie Boucher, Manager, Family Services  
Lori Peill, Executive Administrative Assistant

**Zoom Monitor:** Emily Johnson

**Meeting Call to Order – Jane Jess**

Good evening and welcome to the 2020 Annual General Meeting of the Edmonton Down Syndrome Society.

My name is Jane Jess, and I am the Chair of the Board of Directors, one of six – soon to be nine – volunteers who serve in a governance role for the Society under the province of Alberta Societies Act.

Before the fun starts, I must ask our Board Secretary, Elia Damis, if we have quorum for our AGM.

**Establish Quorum – Elia Damis**

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Under the regulations for the Act you just referred to, quorum at an Annual General Meeting of the Membership shall be four (4) members.

I also want to have on the record that notice of this AGM was provided to the EDSS membership via email on September 1, 2020, along with information that it would be a virtual assembly.

Under the Act, we are required to provide no less than 14 days' notice in writing using a newsletter, website, email, text and/or social media.

Madame Chair, we have quorum to conduct the affairs of the Edmonton Down Syndrome Society.

I want to remind everyone logged in to this meeting, that we will be using a voting link this evening. For those who registered, you will have received an email for each resolution to be voted on. It says, "Click Here to Vote". It should be straightforward, but Lori is here if we have any hiccups.

Two minutes will be granted for voting on motions and affirmation of the Steering Committee slate of candidates, and 10 minutes will be allocated for voting on elected positions to the Board of Directors.

After voting has closed, the Chair will proceed to other meeting business while the ballots are counted by our online scrutineer – Election Runner.

### **Opening Remarks and Virtual Introductions – Jane Jess**

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Well, as we've all become accustomed over the past seven months, welcome to our virtual meeting. We hope this message finds you well, safe and navigating the gradual return to life, school, and the pursuit of a vacation somewhere in the not-too-distant future maybe?

I'd like to begin the formal part of the agenda by asking my colleagues on the Board of Directors to introduce themselves to the group and seeing a few new faces, perhaps we could do a quick video 'hello' and introduction by everyone joining us this evening:

The following Board of Directors introduced themselves:

- Tomek Wala, Vice-Chair
- Elia Damis, Board Secretary (Chairperson of the Steering Committee)
- Lucia Stachurski, Treasurer
- Jennifer Cassidy, Director
- Mabel Tu, Director (Steering Committee)

After the Board members were thanked, members attending via Zoom were invited to introduce themselves.

Thank you everybody and again, welcome. We look forward to your participation in the annual affairs of EDSS.

As everyone knows from the Board Reports and COVID Updates that have been disseminated by our Executive Director, we have made a significant investment in our infrastructure here at EDSS to ensure the safety of our staff, families, caregivers, therapists, and volunteers.

To show you what the 'NEW' EDSS offices look like and to tell the story of 'WHAT WE DO', a video presentation by Julie Boucher, Manager of Family Services, was played.

### **Approval of Agenda – Jane Jess**

Thank you, Julie.

I think I speak for everyone when I say thanks to the Team at EDSS who, amid everything else, were general contractors and decorators on this makeover.

Thanks also to the Avery Linton Legacy Foundation for its generosity in paying the \$35,000 renovation bill. Our Executive Director will have more to say on that in his report.

Now on to the first item of business for the meeting. You all received in the member package a copy of the agenda. Are there any additions to the agenda?

Hearing none, can I ask for a motion to approve the agenda?

**Motion #1 – Approval of the Agenda for the 2020 Annual General Meeting of EDSS**

**Tomek Wala:** Madame Chair, Tomek Wala, Board Vice-Chair. I move the approval of the agenda for the 2020 Annual General Meeting of the Edmonton Down Syndrome Society.

**Mabel Tu:** Madame Chair, Mabel Tu, Board of Director. I second the motion.

**Jane Jess:** The motion to approve the agenda has been moved by Tomek Wala and seconded by Mabel Tu. Any further discussion before I call for the vote?

Hearing none, all in favour?

Two minutes for voting...

**Motion Carried.**

**Adoption of Minutes of the 2019 AGM – Jane Jess**

As part of this year's AGM package, you all received the minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting. Are there any additions, omissions or errors that need to be corrected?

Hearing none, can I ask for a motion to approve the minutes of the 2019 AGM?

**Motion #2 – Adoption of the Minutes of the AGM of EDSS on September 19, 2019**

**Debbie McLeod:** Madame Chair, Debbie McLeod, member. I move the adoption of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Edmonton Down Syndrome Society, held at the EDSS centre, on September 19, 2019.

**Rosalind Mosychuk:** I second the motion.

**Jane Jess:** The motion to approve the adoption of the 2019 AGM minutes has been moved by Debbie McLeod and seconded by Rosalind Mosychuk. Any further discussion before I call for the vote?

Hearing none, all in favour?

Two minutes for voting...

**Motion Carried.**

**Business Arising from the 2019 Minutes – Jane Jess**

Does anyone have business from the minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting that won't be addressed as part of this year's agenda?

Hearing none, we will proceed to the next item on the agenda. And that's me again, with a report on behalf of the EDSS Board of Directors.

## **Report of the EDSS Board Chair – Jane Jess**

As I opened in my message to you in the 2019-2020 Annual Report, if I had to describe the past year at EDSS, there is no doubt it would be about constant change, resilience, and leadership.

Like all of you, I too had personal challenges during this pandemic, and it was because of the support and friendships in our circles – now often referred to as our ‘bubbles’ – that we persevered.

We have truly come together at home, in our community, and at EDSS, in ways that feed the human spirit.

This time last year, our organization was facing what would soon become a disruption in the day-to-day operations of our Society. I’m so happy now, to report that with the hiring last December of our new Executive Director, Alan Clay, we have an exciting future ahead of us even during these challenging times with COVID-19.

Alan’s leadership and passion have brought our uniquely family together and the EDSS Team, if you’ve ever been in the office or watched their videos on social media promoting an event, are having fun, and getting things done. Lots of things.

While this pandemic is affecting us in so many ways, including the revenue picture here in our organization, the EDSS Team is working on new and creative programming, fundraising initiatives that we will get a teaser of tonight, sponsorship opportunities, and community partnerships.

The past year was also one of listening and acting on what we heard. In June, our new ED facilitated a joint session of the Board and Steering Committee. Over the summer, the Team engaged with our membership and other stakeholders through strategic visioning workshops and other online chats.

I know we have a spot on the agenda to thank our retiring volunteers, but I want my comments to reflect my heartfelt gratitude for the countless volunteer hours and expertise that four of our retiring Board members have given to this organization.

Kellie Dearlow and Debbie McLeod, our Board representatives from the Steering Committee; and Vice-Chair Tomek Wala and Treasurer Lucia Stachurski... thank you so much for your generous volunteer service.

In closing, I will again echo my remarks from the annual report and say thank you to our families and volunteers. Your passion for your loved ones bring life and meaning to the work we do!

Thank you. That concludes my report. I will ask for a motion to approve it.

### **Motion #3 – Report of the EDSS Board Chair**

**Jennifer Cassidy:** Madame Chair, Jennifer Cassidy, Board of Director. I move the approval of the Report of the EDSS Board Chair.

**Elia Damis:** Madame Chair, Elia Damis, Board Secretary. I second the motion.

**Jane Jess:** The motion to approve the Report of the EDSS Board Chair has been moved by Jennifer Cassidy and seconded by Elia Damis. Any further discussion before I call for the vote?

Hearing none, all in favour?

Two minutes for voting...

**Motion Carried.**

**Report of the EDSS Executive Director – Alan Clay**

Thank you, Madame Chair.

Board members, colleagues, EDSS members, friends, and guests.

It was 10 months ago on this day, December 1, that I met many of you for the first time at the EDSS Christmas Party. Since that time, I have had the honour and the privilege to do so in a variety of settings, both in-person and virtually.

Thank you for your support during these uncertain times and to the Board, thank you for allowing Julie, Lori and myself to continue in the pursuit of what we are building together – a unique community that delivers on our mandate as a registered not-for-profit organization serving all people born with Down syndrome.

We are excited about the future and the partnerships and opportunities to serve our families throughout our geographic region, one that stretches from Red Deer to Lloydminster, Grande Prairie, and the Northwest Territories. I am so fortunate to work with an amazing Team in Junkyard Julie and Lookout Lori.

As we kicked off the AGM with a virtual tour of the renovations we've undertaken at the Centre, I want to thank the Avery Linton Legacy Foundation for financing the entire project as part of a \$50,000 donation that they presented to us earlier today. I'm so thrilled that I can announce this gift today. We will use the balance of the funds to support our outreach initiatives in our catchment areas as well as offsetting production costs associated with Uniquely Me TV, which will be showing you teasers of later in the program. For those that are part of the EDSS bowling league, some of the proceeds from this donation were requested to go to the league.

Thank you, Kellie Dearlow, for nurturing the relationship with the Avery Linton Legacy Foundation prior to my arrival at EDSS.

We are also looking forward in the next few weeks to re-launching our therapy services here at the Centre, as well as Musical Theatre resuming operations – safely – later this month.

As there remains the risk of a second wave of COVID-19, therapy services and Musical Theatre will be the only two programs running at the Centre. We will continue to monitor the situation before announcing the start-up of Play Group, Babes Who Brunch, Worker Bee workshops as part of the Joey Moss Literacy Centre for Excellence, and Club 21, which has moved to virtual Fridays, including a bingo night Friday.

I want to report that with the resumption of Musical Theatre on Wednesday evenings and Saturdays, we will be having a part-time person working the Reception Area to ensure we follow all Ministry of Health guidelines. As well, we have doubled our cleaning of the Centre to ensure we keep everyone safe. As

most of you may know from other businesses you've patronized, 'COVID surcharges' are now part of many bills. However, I am pleased to report that your Board of Directors last month approved an Administration recommendation that the additional costs, an estimated \$5,600 for the season, will not be passed on to those enrolled in this important EDSS program.

To our members, you are the reason we make magic happen at EDSS. It's why we changed up the format of Uniquely Me this year and made it a made-for-YouTube video called **Uniquely Me TV**. It is going to be a really big show! Stay tuned!

Thanks to Rosalind Mosychuk for her patience as we took it from the catwalk to virtual reality.

*(At this time a Public Service Announcement video was shown of UMTV.)*

We also upgraded our technology at the Centre in June, with a complete IT renewal of computers and phones. This project improves business operations and enhances our users' experience with better wi-fi and internet connectivity.

In other highlights...

#### **By the Numbers...**

Membership... our current membership stands at about 230, up from 130 in January. We ended the year in 2019 with 314 members.

Therapies... on an annual basis, we provide the following on-site, professional services to about 70 of our families, mainly those living in Central Alberta:

- Almost 1400 hours of speech language
- 180 hours of occupational therapy
- And 180 hours of behavioural therapy

As our Board Chair referenced in her remarks, we undertook a series of strategic vision workshops over the summer with our Board of Directors, Steering Committee and Staff, Members and Associate Members. As well, we engaged with members via email submissions, phone interviews and conversations during our outdoor fitness sessions at Hawrelak Park.

For those who participated in the exercise, we started off with *The Elevator Pitch*. You just got in the elevator of the 66-storey Stantec Tower in the Ice District of Downtown Edmonton with a group of business leaders asking about EDSS.

In your own words, describe what you would say...

- All over the place
- Supporting families with children born with Down syndrome
- Greater understanding leads to better communities with more passion
- Personal approach
- Partnering with EDSS gives opportunities to businesses in this time of change

#### **Individual Perspectives – SWOT Analysis**

What 2-2 things come to mind around the organization's strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities.

## Strengths

- Community
- Physical space (EDSS Centre at 9139 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW)
- Professional staff believing in the vision
- Volunteers, self advocates, and our kids
- Specialized therapies and medical community
- Pivotal position now

## Weaknesses

- Governance – lack of policy and procedures
- Too much drama, legacy, hurt and personal agendas
- Reputation in the disability community is one of in-fighting
- Leadership stability
- Social media presence
- Diversity (board, Steering Committee, membership, therapists)
- Outreach beyond Edmonton catchment area and marginalized populations

## Opportunities

- Outreach
- Social media (including website)
- Transition supports / journey mapping
- Connecting generations
- Meeting age needs not age-related activities
- More professionalism and mutual respect in the organization

## Threats

- Fiscal independence
- No policy and procedures – not adhering to them
- No partnerships
- Lack of unity throughout the organization
- Being where we are today in five (5) years

### ***Group Discussion – Mission, Vision, Values***

What you would say...

- Values don't resonate (e.g., diversity)
- Vision should be about leaving a legacy for families that came after us
- In growth mode... need to be more impactful

### ***Group Discussion – The Million Dollar Question (Fictional)***

What you would do...

- Invest the funds and live off the interest
- Scholarship fund
- Social enterprise
- Housing

### ***Group Discussion – EDSS Five (5) Years from Now***

What you would say...

- Incremental change
- Stable leadership
- Supports for aging adults
- Separate foundation for housing
- Community building

In closing, I want to assure the membership that despite the pandemic and the challenges that come with it, still, we can see opportunities and together, we will celebrate them!

Thank you. That concludes my report, Madame Chair.

**Jane Jess:** Thank you Alan. Can I please ask for a motion to approve the Report of the EDSS Executive Director?

#### **Motion #4 – Report of the EDSS Executive Director**

**Mabel Tu:** Madame Chair, Mabel Tu, Board of Director. I move the approval of the Report of the EDSS Executive Director.

**Gail Faulkner:** Madame Chair, Gail Faulkner, member. I second the motion.

**Jane Jess:** The motion to approve the Report of the EDSS Executive Director has been moved by Mabel Tu and seconded by Gail Faulkner. Any further discussion before I call for the vote?

Hearing none, all in favour?

Two minutes for voting...

#### **Motion Carried.**

**Jane Jess:** We now move to the money stuff and here to walk us through the Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2020, and our 2020-2021 Budget, is our Treasurer Lucia Stachurski.

#### **Report of the EDSS Board Treasurer – Lucia Stachurski**

Thank you. I will be briefly highlighting the major points from the audited financial statements.

First, you will note that the Auditor's Report on page 1 is a qualified report. Being a non-profit relying on donations and fundraising, it is impossible for the auditor to completely verify that everything is accounted for. This is a standard qualification for all non-profits and nothing to be concerned about.

Overall, the auditor found no major issues during the audit and, actually, was complimentary of staff having files and records more organized this year making the audit easier. So, thank you to Lori for that.

On the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures on page 3, there are a few items to note:

- Revenues were down from last year which were offset by higher therapy and casino revenues. In addition, we were eligible for the federal wage subsidy. Donations and fundraising were down mostly to the cancellation of our walk in June.
- Program expenses were also down due primarily to the shutting down of programs because of the pandemic and the cancellation of the walk in June. Facility costs were also lower because of property tax credits passed on to us by the landlord.
- Administrative expenses increased last year primarily due to the office being fully staffed. Professional fees include two years of audit fees as the decision was to accrue those costs this year and going forward. IT support and maintenance costs were higher reflecting costs of upgrading the system to eliminate connection issues hampering operations.
- Overall, the deficit totalled \$20,874.

On the Statement of Financial Position on page 5, you will note the following:

- We have assets totalling \$476,705 and liabilities totalling \$190,884 for net assets of \$285,821.
- Liabilities include \$131,004 of casino funds which we have in the bank but have not yet recognized as revenue.

Madame Chair, I would like to ask for the first of two motions on the acceptance of the Treasurer's Report. The first one being on the Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2020.

**Motion #5 – Report of the Board Treasurer – Audited Financial Statements Year Ended June 30, 2020**

**Tomek Wala:** Madame Chair, Tomek Wala, Board Vice-Chair. I move the approval of the EDSS Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2020.

**Kellie Dearlow:** Madame Chair, Kellie Dearlow, member. I second the motion.

**Jane Jess:** The motion to approve the EDSS Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2020, has been moved by Tomek Wala and seconded by Kellie Dearlow. Any further discussion before I call for the vote?

Hearing none, all in favour?

Two minutes for voting...

**Motion Carried.**

**Lucia Stachurski:** Madame Chair, I will now be presenting on the EDSS Budget for 2020-2021.

As you can imagine, that with so many unknowns this year, preparing a budget was challenging.

We opted for a conservative budget meaning that we did not put on our rose-coloured glasses. Although we do feel that the actual picture will be better, especially considering the announcement in the ED's report regarding the Avery Linton donation. Also, since we prepared the budget, the federal government announced the extension of the wage subsidy.

Overall, the budget forecasts a total revenue of \$432,296 with expenses of \$553,710 for a budgeted deficit of \$121,414.

The first Sport Your Ride held last month netted \$7,177 for EDSS. It was a fun event for participants and hopefully, it will grow next year. We did not budget for another Sport Your Ride or walk in the Spring. If we were to hold one that would have a positive impact on the bottom line.

Uniquely Me TV is forecast to net \$102,500; however, we are hoping for a greater amount. We will be relying on all members to invite family, friends, and business contacts to tune in on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Third-party donations include expected donations from four foundations.

Casino revenue will offset therapy costs, the Joey Moss Literacy Centre costs and more than half of the physical fitness costs.

Musical Theatre has until this year paid for itself. However, we are forecasting a deficit this year resulting from the required measures for COVID and credits owed from cancellation of last year's program. As has already been reported by our ED, the Board decided not to pass those costs on to participants to keep the program affordable.

You will also note that some committees will not be carrying out any programming; however, a \$2,000 reserve has been approved under the Steering Committee should activities be able to resume prior to fiscal year end.

The Board's budgeted expenses include governance training, AGM costs and professional services such as legal or consulting services.

Administration is the largest budget line and salaries make up the largest portion of this budget. We have already realized savings in IT, telephones and rent and will continue to be looking for efficiencies (e.g., credit card fees and software costs).

In closing, although we have budgeted for the worst, we expect the final picture will be better as we pursue both revenue and savings opportunities.

Thank you to the membership for the opportunity to serve as your treasurer, and to my colleagues on the Board.

Madame Chair, I would like to ask for the second motion on the acceptance of the Treasurer's Report. This one being the approval of the EDSS 2020-2021 Budget.

**Motion #6 – Report of the Board Treasurer – EDSS 2020-2021 Budget**

**Jennifer Cassidy:** Madame Chair, Jennifer Cassidy, Board of Director. I move the approval of the EDSS 2020-2021 Budget.

**Elia Damis:** Madame Chair, Elia Damis, Board Secretary. I second the motion.

**Jane Jess:** The motion to approve the EDSS 2020-2021 Budget has been moved by Jennifer Cassidy and seconded by Elia Damis. Any further discussion before I call for the vote?

**Questions**

**Lyle:** On the government emergency funding, what programs were accessed by EDSS and are they reflected in the budget?

**Lucia:** In the EDSS budget, we reflected the subsidy we expected to receive up until September. With the announcement by the federal government of the extension of the wage subsidy, which came after our budget was prepared, we expect to receive more revenue.

**Lyle:** Are there other programs we qualify for, such as the rental subsidy?

**E.D.:** Thank you for your question. The wage subsidy, known as CEWS – Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy – is a program we are taking advantage of. Throughout the program, the Society has paid \$0.25 on the dollar as the government has paid 75% of the wages, a huge benefit to the organization and one that has kept the three of us working within the organization. We also did apply and were successful for the \$40,000 business loan, \$10,000 of which is non-refundable and the other \$30,000 is interest free until December 2021.

**E.D.:** A lot of work on grant applications, but most were for assistance of front-line supports. In terms of the federal government rent subsidy, it comes through the landlord, and yes, we qualified. We also benefit from a property-tax exemption from the City of Edmonton as a not-for-profit that the Sawin Family generously passes along to EDSS.

**Shane:** Looking at some of the bottom-line deficits, which are high percentages of the overall budget, maybe a comment of a longer-term sustainability going forward fall short, a possible second wave, government grants may not be available.

**Lucia:** The budget was a very conservative approach with a pessimistic evaluation of what the revenues might be coming in. The \$50,000 cheque makes a huge difference. We feel that we will be able to make it up. Looking at the assets, we feel that this will help support the organization over the next year. There are always ways to cut expenses. There are casino moneys that will be available for the therapies. Because of the pandemic, our next casino date won't occur until summer of 2022.

**Lyle:** Clarification that the wage subsidy is only budgeted till September?

**Lucia:** In October and November, we may not be eligible because of our fundraising revenue.

**Lyle:** What was our total revenue last year?

**Lucia:** Our revenue last year was \$517,062.

**Crystal:** Asked for clarity on the costs of the fitness classes.

**Lucia:** We did receive \$7,500 from the Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) towards fitness.

**E.D.:** There has not been a fee to members for our fitness program.

**Jane Jess:** Seeing no other questions, I will now call for the vote on Motion #6, the Report of the Board Treasurer to approve the EDSS 2020-2021 Budget. All in favour?

Two minutes for voting...

**Motion Carried.**

## **Report of the EDSS Steering Committee – Elia Damis**

Thank you, Madame Chair.

I want to start by hoping this finds our families well as we navigate through this pandemic.

This year began again with an excellent turnout at our last Annual General Membership meeting. For the last two years, over 80 members have attended, and it shows our members are engaged and supportive of EDSS. Thank you!

We welcomed Alan Clay as the Executive Director in December where he was introduced to many of you at our fabulous Christmas Party. We again surpassed an attendance record with 363 guests including the Board of Directors, Steering Committee, and Staff.

Many of the activities that the Steering Committee undertook for our membership, such as rebranding Go21, membership surveys and our commitment to ensuring members were engaged in strategic planning was transferred to the responsibility of the Executive Director.

We hosted a Learning Session on Teen to Adult Transitioning on February 20. We had wonderful attendance with 18 attendees and a panel of parent volunteers.

We are pleased to share that the Steering Committee and Executive Director have a respectful working relationship with each other grounded in mutual respect and collaboration. In this regard, the expectations and the role of the Steering Committee are being transformed to reflect the new direction of the organization.

With that, this past month we were able to pass an updated Interim Terms of Reference. As a subcommittee to the Board, the Terms of Reference defines the purpose and object of the committee along with the roles and responsibilities. It also describes the composition of the committee. The document is significant as it brings together representation of the board, the membership, and the Executive Director to positively collaborate to further this organization and ultimately to support our children, especially the ones that we love with Down syndrome.

We as the Steering Committee can finally move on and support the organization in other ways. The passing of the Interim Terms of Reference – showing the level of collaboration, the level of organization that we do have between the Board of Directors and the Executive Director.

During these unprecedented and evolving times, as you can appreciate, many of the other activities/events were paused. The Steering Committee resumed meetings virtually in May. We also had our first joint meeting with the Board of Directors, Steering Committee, and the Staff, in June with a commitment to meet at least twice per year going forward.

Succession planning has always been a priority for the Steering Committee so that we have new voices at the table adding new ideas and fresh perspectives. We are excited to announce that we have added two new positions to the composition of the Steering Committee (18-29 and +30 age groups), to reflect the changing demographic of our membership so that they have equal representation. A silver lining of this pandemic is that we have learned to utilize technology better (via Zoom) and we hope to reach out to members in our catchment area outside of Edmonton and surrounding communities so that they can become more involved in EDSS.

We will continue to represent our members and work in partnership with our Executive Director, Board of Directors, and Staff, to bring forward ways to bring activities and events to you.

In closing with this report, I would like to give our appreciation to the Steering Committee members who have stepped down this past year:

- Mark Johnston – for his commitment of six years
- Connie Baxter – of two years
- A very special thank you to Debbie McLeod who dedicated four years
- Kellie Dearlow who dedicated six years

Kellie, the outgoing Steering Committee Chair, and Debbie, the outgoing Secretary, tirelessly helped navigate the operational responsibilities for significantly longer than anticipated from a volunteer position both on the Steering Committee and the Board. Their efforts have significantly formed the composition and longitude of what the organization is today. We can't begin to applaud your efforts and wish you the best of luck in your future endeavours and thank you so much.

Stay safe and have a great year!

Before we move on to the next part, we do have a vacant spot for the Steering Committee and I would like to do a call out just for anyone who would like to step up into one of the positions, now that we have 10, and we have nine spots that are going to be filled – categories of 12 to 17 and 18 to 29 age groups.

As we don't require an election for the vacant positions on the Steering Committee, I am going to include the affirmation of the slate of candidates for 2020-2021 as part of my report and would ask for a motion.

Ali Shamseldine, Dave Derraugh, Diane Gersky, Jacqueline Dymianiw, Elia Damis, Mabel Tu, Kaylyn Juchli, Melissa Danielson, and Shane Pospisil.

**Jane Jess:** Thank you Elia. Can I please ask for a motion?

**Motion #7 – Report of the EDSS Steering Committee & Slate of Candidates for 2020-2021**

**Debbie McLeod:** Madame Chair, Debbie McLeod, member. I move the Report of the EDSS Steering Committee and affirmation of the Slate of Candidates for 2020-2021.

**Kellie Dearlow:** Madame Chair, Kellie Dearlow, member. I second the motion.

**Jane Jess:** The motion to approve the Report of the EDSS Steering Committee and Slate of Candidates for 2020-2021 has been moved by Debbie McLeod and seconded by Kellie Dearlow. Any further discussion before I call for the vote?

**Debb:** My question won't affect the vote, but at some point, can the members get a list of those names and reference to the ages they represent as the document with AGM materials with everyone's bio doesn't specifically mention which group they represent. And the Terms of Reference mentioned, where can we access them?

**Elia:** As far as the age categories, we are working to have the bios put onto the website along with the pictures. The Interim Terms of Reference were just passed, and we are looking to get that out to the membership.

**Jane Jess:** Seeing no other questions, I will now call for the vote on Motion #7, the Report of the EDSS Steering Committee and Slate of Candidates for 2020-2021. All in favour?

Two minutes for voting...

**Motion Carried.**

**Jane Jess:** Congratulations to all of you on your role with the EDSS Steering Committee. We all look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

We now move to that part in the agenda where we have the election of officers to the EDSS Board of Directors. How exciting it is that we have an election. Congratulations to Jennifer Cassidy, Elia Damis and Bryna Sclater for their work in recruiting candidates for these important seats on the Board.

I will turn things over to the Nominating Committee to introduce the candidates and set the stage for our election.

**Election of Officers to the EDSS Board of Directors**

**Jennifer Cassidy:** Thank you, Madame Chair. The EDSS Board of Directors is a five-to-nine-member team of passionate, dedicated volunteers, committed to advocating for and enriching the lives of individuals with Down syndrome. Two seats are reserved for members of the EDSS Steering Committee with the balance of three to seven seats from being elected from the community at large. There will be elections for five vacant seats on the Board this year. We graciously thank Lucia and Tomek for their two years of dedication and service on the Board from 2018 to 2020. Jane and I were new directors last year, and will enter our second terms for this year.

The EDSS Nominations Committee put out a call for nominations to the 2020-2021 directors which closed on September 4<sup>th</sup>. The Nominations Committee performed qualification and reference checks and seven individuals will qualify to stand for election this year.

These individuals are: Erika Barootes, Brent Johnston, Mike Kostuik, Sarah Ng, Patricia Pasemko, Laiba Rizwan, and Virginia Sebbby.

The current EDSS Board was consulted and identified skills that would strengthen the overall composition of our Board. A number of specific skills were targeted during our recruitment process. The skills being sought included: Board experience, financial and accounting expertise, legal expertise, medical expertise, and advocacy or lobbying expertise.

The following will be the process for our Board election this evening: Each persons' bio will be read out; each candidate will have the floor for 1 to 2 minutes to introduce themselves to the members and say a short word about why they wish to be elected to our Board.

We will hold the election using the polling feature email links. Five individuals with the highest vote percentages will be elected to the board. Those elected will be contacted shortly after the AGM leading to the next steps.

**Elia Damis: Introduction of Candidates Erika Barootes and Brent Johnston**

### **Erika Barootes**

Erika is currently the Vice President, Western Canada, of Enterprise Canada, where she is responsible for business development, and advising clients on their public relations and government relations efforts to help foster long-term relationships with all levels of government and community groups. Her previous roles at EPCOR, Starburst Creative, Barootes & Co., and the Government of Alberta have also centered on strategic planning, public relations, media relations, and communications.

Her volunteer experience is also extensive. She has worked with a number of organizations such as the United Conservative Party (UCP), Fort Edmonton Park, and Edmonton Economic Development Corporation as a volunteer, helping organizations to navigate the political environment, reach their goals, and have strategic conversations around the boardroom table strategizing on fundraising and governance efforts. Her volunteerism is guided by the principle that people always need to come first and that it's our responsibility to do what we can to help others.

Erika states: "Being part of such an inspiring organization that delivers hope and works tirelessly to stand up for the rights and abilities of individuals born with Down syndrome would be rewarding beyond conception". If elected, Erika's significant experience in fundraising, advocacy and governance would be put to strong use on the EDSS Board and she would work hard to ensure success in meeting the EDSS' goals and supporting individuals born with Down syndrome to meet their full potential.

*Erika Barootes spoke to the membership about her passions, her skills, and ways she could help EDSS.*

### **Brent Johnston**

Brent is an experienced finance and business professional with a proven track record of success in directing and designing financial operations and aligning financial incentives to achieve corporate and strategic goals. He is a chartered accountant, with around 20 years of experience in both entrepreneurial and corporate roles. His experience ranges from working in capital markets, raising funds through debenture financing, rights offerings, and acquisitions; acting as the CFO for two publicly traded companies on the TSX; and much more. He has supported organizations through reorganization and restructuring, through growth, and transition.

Outside of work, Brent enjoys volunteering and coaching in various sports, including hockey, baseball, soccer, and more. As a coach, his goal is to ensure the kids he is coaching learn, have fun, and have opportunities to grow. He has had the privilege of coaching two children born with Down syndrome over the years. He also has a friend and colleague who has a child born with Down syndrome. These experiences have grown Brent's desire to give back to the Down syndrome community and help enrich the lives of those with Ds.

He would bring his finance background, business acumen, and coaching philosophies to the EDSS Board if elected, along with a passion for improving the lives of individuals born with Down syndrome.

*Brent Johnston shared a bit of himself, his family, and what he could bring to EDSS.*

### **Bryna Sclater: Introduction of Candidates Mike Kostuik and Sarah Ng**

#### **Mike Kostuik**

Mike is a team leader with more than 10 years of operations management experience. Throughout his career, he has built high-performing teams, driven measurable improvement, led interdepartmental

change, and demonstrated strong project and process-management skills. Currently the Director of Operations at Overhead Door Co. of Edmonton, Mike is a key member of their strategic planning and executive team and plays a lead role in growing the business.

While this would be Mike's first volunteer experience as a not-for-profit board member, he has corporate board experience with his current employer. He has participated in the company's quarterly corporate advisory board meetings where he provides detailed reports on financial performance, sales and business development, and safety and field operations. This experience would translate well into Mike making a valuable contribution to EDSS.

Mike is passionate about his community and using his skill set to make a positive impact in the lives of his fellow Albertans. Should Mike be elected, he would bring his intensity, dedication, hard work and skills towards making a positive impact for a great cause on the EDSS Board of Directors.

*Mike Kostuik introduced himself to the members and spoke of what is important to him.*

### **Sarah Ng**

Sarah is currently the Director of Human Resources with the Excel Society, a non-profit organization that supports and advocates for people with mental, physical, and developmental disabilities in both Edmonton and Calgary. In her current role, she is involved in strategic planning, engagement and company culture, communications and marketing, and human resources. Over the past 10 years, she has played a key role in advancing the organization in progressively senior positions.

She has extensive experience building and interpreting policies, procedures, and legislation and in strong data collection to ensure accurate HR reporting, compliance, and ability to meet strategic goals. She is also a strong negotiator and change leader in the organization.

Sarah is passionate about inclusion of all people. While this would be her first opportunity to sit on a not-for-profit board, her values and beliefs align strongly with the goals of EDSS, and she would bring her skills and experience to advancing the organization if elected to the EDSS Board of Directors.

*Sarah Ng shared a few words about herself and how her skills and knowledge would fit with EDSS.*

### **Jennifer Cassidy: Introduction of Candidates Patricia Pasemko and Laiba Rizwan**

#### **Patricia Pasemko**

Patricia is a senior leader in business and operations with over 25 years of executive leadership, motivating diverse teams and developing vision and strategy for companies. Patricia has built strong stakeholder relationships to influence decisions, managed financial metrics, and budgets, and acted as a media spokesperson and thought leader for global and local businesses such as Coca-Cola Canada, Titan Supply, Intertek Group, CSA Group, and EPCOR.

Patricia believes that each and every one of us has a gift and contribution to make in society. She learned this first-hand growing up with a sister who is developmentally disabled. In both her personal advocacy for her sister, and in her current role as the Executive Director of On-Site Placement (OSP), she has built a strong network of connections and knowledge of the programs and services for people with disabilities in Alberta. She was the Co-Chair of the Staff Retention Committee at Voice of Albertans with

Disabilities, a member of the Brain Injury Interagency Committee, Co-Chair of the Edmonton PCDC Committee, a board member of the PCDC Region, and she supports other community associations.

Patricia attributes her success to hard work and creative thinking, constant and intentional team building, and understanding how to manage through change and taking timed and calculated risks. If elected, Patricia would put these attributes towards making a positive impact at EDSS.

*Patricia Pasemko shared her personal connections and how she would like to support EDSS.*

### **Laiba Rizwan**

Laiba will soon be a Registered Nurse (RN) and has had the opportunity to undertake acute and community placements during her nursing studies at the University of Alberta. She has the ability to perform in high-stress situations and work with individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences. She has developed a strong aptitude for collaborating with interdisciplinary medical professionals and communicating with patients with incomparable care and professionalism.

Laiba has a passion for volunteering and giving back to her community, particularly in programs that help to enrich and enhance the lives of those in vulnerable populations in the community. She currently volunteers with the Canadian Red Cross and Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. In the past, she has worked with the Chatters program as a mentor to help facilitate the development of social skills in children diagnosed with conditions impacting their interactions skills. While aiming to implement programs directed at improving mental health awareness in elementary schools, she interacted with children at different learning and developmental stages and assessed their level of understanding to implement strength-building appropriate programs.

As a nurse, Laiba is committed to always considering the mental, physical, and social aspects of an individual's care. She would bring this mindset and passion into her work on the EDSS Board of Directors should she be elected, working hard to enrich the lives on individuals born with Down syndrome.

*Laiba Rizwan greeted members and shared a bit of herself and how her experience and knowledge could support EDSS.*

### **Elia Damis: Introduction of Candidate Virginia Seby**

#### **Virginia Seby**

Virginia Seby has worked in the healthcare and social services sector at senior and executive management levels for over 11 years in Canada and Australia. In the last few years, Ms. Seby has supported individuals with developmental disabilities, mental and physical health challenges, overcome their life challenges and successfully attain employment and live fulfilled lives. Through her work, she has developed compassion, patience, understanding, and love for others and finds fulfillment in helping people and improving their quality of life.

Ms. Seby is an active community member and a member of Autism Edmonton, Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). Also, Ms. Seby is currently serving on two boards, namely, the Alberta Disability Workers Association (ADWA) and the Volunteer Programs Association (VPA) – Fort Saskatchewan Victim Services, located at the RCMP detachment unit. She has participated in numerous committees, policy-making organizations, and governance

recommendations to provincial governments affecting policy changes, and co-authored needs assessments.

Ms. Virginia Sebby's educational background in management, healthcare, mental health, and counselling psychology (master's level) has allowed her to deliver exceptional individual and group support services to diverse cultural groups. Her educational background and work experience have built her skills in managing operations, team building, policy development, and strategic business planning. If elected to the EDSS Board of Directors, Virginia would put her administrative and leadership skills to fair use in the advancement of the organization.

*Virginia Sebby was unable to attend due to a personal emergency.*

**Jennifer Cassidy:** Thank you to all seven of you for putting your name forward for nominations. It is an incredible thing to stand up in a community organization and support the amazing work that EDSS does. Thank you for actively seeking us out and responding to our calls for board nominations.

Voting will now begin using the polling feature. Five individuals with the highest vote total will be elected to the EDSS Board of Directors. While voting is underway, I will turn things over to Jane to continue with the business portion of the meeting.

#### **Tribute to retiring Board and Steering Committee Members – Jane Jess**

We would like to take this opportunity to say goodbye to four members of the EDSS Board of Directors who played a significant role in driving EDSS forward, each with their unique insight and skills. They have served EDSS with genuine passion and caring for our families and dedicated time and effort in helping to ensure our Society's Vision, Mission, and Values are upheld. We offer enormous thanks to Debbie McLeod and Kellie Dearlow, our board representatives from the Steering Committee, as well as our Vice-Chair, Tomek Wala, and Treasurer, Lucia Stachurski, for their generous volunteer services. Thank you so much.

#### **Open Forum: Moderator – Alan Clay**

47 comments came through the chat line, but there were no questions.

Shane recommends setting up a fundraising committee with a collaborative partnership team as fundraising has become a very competitive environment.

The Executive Director responded by agreeing that fundraising is a priority, and he is excited to work with the new Board of Directors to develop a committee or cabinet. He spoke of the marketing benefits that will be available from filming of *Uniquely Me TV* for years to come.

Bryna asked about where we are at around some of the advocacy issues resulting in changes of supports.

The Executive Director spoke on some of the directions that EDSS would like to move forward on advocacy and fundraising and the challenges for each because of the pandemic restrictions.

Kellie shared that it was the Beggs family who built the relationship with the Avery Linton Legacy Foundation that began the connection between EDSS and the Foundation.

Pam had a question about having her child be a part of *Uniquely Me TV*.

Executive Director shared that the filming has already been done for this year, and he is excited for everyone to watch the show!

### **Election Results – EDSS Board of Directors**

Jane Jess announced the outcome of the electronic voting for five new board members and congratulated everyone for participating.

- ✓ Erika Barootes
- ✓ Brent Johnston
- ✓ Mike Kostuik
- ✓ Patricia Pasemko
- ✓ Laiba Rizwan

The new board members will be receiving a binder for their orientation to EDSS, and Staff will follow up with them around police checks and other documents.

### **Proposed Date of 2021 AGM**

Thursday, October 7, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

### **Stay Tuned! *Uniquely Me TV* commercial**

Cameras rolling...

### **Adjournment**

**Jane Jess:** Thank you everyone for your participation in this Annual General Meeting, and to the Staff and volunteers who put this meeting together. We hope it was a valuable use of your time. We will see you all again on November 2 when we debut *Uniquely Me TV*.

### **Motion #8 – To Adjourn the 2020 Annual General Meeting of the Edmonton Down Syndrome Society**

**Tomek Wala:** Madame Chair, Tomek Wala, Board Vice-Chair. In my final act as the Board Vice-Chair, it is my honour to move the adjournment of the 2020 Annual General Meeting of the Edmonton Down Syndrome Society. It has truly been a pleasure to serve this organization. Good night all and stay safe.

Time allowance for voting waived...

### **Motion Carried.**