

COCHRANE REGIONAL FOOD BANK

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Date: Monday, October 19, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Location: Cochrane Food Bank Board Room, 110 Fifth Avenue, Cochrane, Ontario

Chairperson: Gary Girard, President

Recording Secretary: Marion Onolack

1. Call to Order

President Gary Girard called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Attendance

Present: Gary Girard, Patricia Nelson, Alison Down, Martin Ayotte, Marion Onolack, Joy Searles and Linda Warrell.

Management Present: Ardis Proulx, General Manager.

Regrets: James Gould and Jill Gould, both absent due to illness (flu).

Quorum: Seven of nine board members were present; quorum was established.

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion: To approve the agenda as presented.

Moved by: Linda Warrell

Seconded by: Patricia Nelson

Result: Carried.

4. Adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion: To adopt the minutes of the previous board meeting as read.

Moved by: Alison Down

Seconded by: Linda Warrell

Result: Carried.

5. President's Report

President Gary Girard referred members to his written report, circulated before the meeting. He thanked management, staff and volunteers for their continued work and advised that Vice President Patricia Nelson would represent the board during his approximately two-week absence. No further questions were raised.

6. General Manager's Report

6.1 Community Partnerships. Management reported an improved relationship with Giant Tiger, including food donations, a donation collection bin and reinstatement of a charge account for necessary program purchases. The Food Bank also continues its partnership with Second Harvest.

6.2 Feed Ontario Grant. A \$2,200 grant was approved toward a stove and laptop. The stove was purchased locally from Home Hardware for planned soup kitchen operations in the new year. The laptop will support food section operations and regional shipping labels.

6.3 Northern Distribution. Regional deliveries continue to Moosonee, Moose Factory, Peawanuck, Attawapiskat, Kashechewan and Fort Albany. Management reported approximately one skid per month to participating remote communities and anticipated additional Feed Ontario resources.

6.4 Thrift Store Roof. Replacement work is scheduled to begin October 21, 2026, including roofing membrane and drainage improvements. The thrift store will close temporarily; the Food Bank and warehouse will remain open.

6.5 Freezer Compressor. A replacement compressor part has been ordered. Installation will be arranged upon arrival, with approximately eight hours of freezer downtime expected. The board thanked management for its work.

7. Treasurer's and Financial Report

Alison Down reviewed the financial position, noting significant expenditures on capital improvements and operations. Approximately \$75,000 remains payable for the roof project. The investment portfolio was estimated at approximately \$700,000 and is accessible for withdrawals. The board discussed cash flow, declining donations, rising food costs and the need to maintain sufficient operating funds.

Motion: To authorize the Treasurer to withdraw up to \$100,000 from the organization's investments, at the Treasurer's discretion, as required to maintain adequate operating funds and meet organizational expenses.

Moved by: Joy Searles

Seconded by: Patricia Nelson

Result: Carried.

8. 50/50 Fundraising Report

The board discussed the successful licensed 50/50 draws. Management reported the fundraising account had increased from approximately \$7,000 to more than \$18,000. The current licence extends through January 2027. Required reports will continue to be submitted after each draw, and a renewal application will be prepared. The board will consider eligible uses of proceeds, including food purchases, in accordance with municipal lottery requirements.

9. Programming Report

The written report by Courtney Deschenes was reviewed and commended. The upcoming Seasoned to Share workshop on October 20, 2026, at 1:00 PM at the Royal Canadian Legion will focus on practical uses for tomato paste. The workshop is open to the community, including non-clients. The board expressed appreciation for Seasoned to Share and Ladles of Love programming.

10. Health and Safety Report

The written report by Danielle Moreau was reviewed. Three smoke detectors have been installed in the food section, warehouse and thrift store following the previous board recommendation. New salt and sand containers and bulk winter maintenance supplies were purchased. Warehouse shelving was painted safety yellow for improved visibility. The board thanked Danielle and those who assisted.

11. Food Bank Statistics and Regional Services

11.1 Client Demand and Thanksgiving. Client numbers remain relatively steady, with demand expected to rise in colder weather. Increased reliance by people experiencing homelessness was noted. One hundred Thanksgiving hampers were distributed to registered client households, with board member assistance.

11.2 Regional Warehouse. Management reported rapid inventory turnover while serving approximately 27 agencies. The organization continues to secure resources through Feed Ontario, Second Harvest and local retail partners.

11.3 Christmas Hampers. Approximately 300 hampers are anticipated, compared with approximately 250 last year, for registered Food Bank client households. Management is purchasing strategically when items are on sale.

11.4 January Needs. The board discussed the anticipated inventory gap between Feed Ontario shipments and increased post-holiday demand. Potential eligible use of 50/50 proceeds for food will be revisited as needs become clearer.

12. Old Business

12.1 Thrift Store Roof Replacement. Work is scheduled to start October 21, 2026, to replace damaged roofing and improve drainage. Approximately half of the contract has been paid; the remainder is due according to contract terms. The board welcomed progress before winter.

12.2 By-Laws Review. Patricia Nelson and Alison Down will meet with legal counsel on October 20, 2026, regarding amendments and compliance with the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA). The board discussed governance protections, regular by-law reviews and providing finalized by-laws to the Directors and Officers insurer. Appropriate membership approval will be sought before adoption.

13. New Business

13.1 Board Training. Management circulated information about free Feed Ontario webinars covering advocacy, fundraising and governance. Board members were encouraged to participate; recordings may be available to registrants.

13.2 Stephanie Bernier Toy Drive. The second annual toy drive will take place November 7, 2026, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM at Giant Tiger, with the Food Bank truck collecting new toys. Board members were encouraged to support the event.

13.3 Annual Christmas Sale. The 30th Annual Christmas Sale is scheduled for November 23, 2026.

13.4 Kids Christmas Night. The fourth annual event will take place November 27, 2026, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Children will shop on a pay-what-you-can basis, with gift wrapping, Santa photographs and activities. Board volunteers are welcome.

13.5 Operation Christmas Child. The Food Bank plans to assemble 50 shoeboxes this year, compared with 25 last year, using suitable donated items. Staff, volunteers and board members will be invited to a group packing session.

13.6 Christmas Dinner. The board and staff dinner is scheduled for December 5, 2026. Invitations will be circulated. A separate volunteer appreciation activity is planned.

13.7 Lions Club Christmas Telethon. Board members were encouraged to assist at the December 6, 2026 telethon, including answering telephones.

13.8 Legal Review Follow-Up. Patricia Nelson and Alison Down will report on their legal meeting at the next board meeting, with urgent matters communicated by email if needed.

14. Acceptance of Reports

Motion: To accept all reports as read and presented to the Board of Directors.

Moved by: Martin Ayotte

Seconded by: Joy Searles

Result: Carried.

15. Next Meeting

Monday, November 16, 2026, at 6:00 PM in the Cochrane Food Bank Board Room, 110 Fifth Avenue, Cochrane, Ontario. Regular board meetings will begin at 6:00 PM unless otherwise communicated.

16. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Moved by: Martin Ayotte

Seconded by: Joy Searles

Result: Carried.

Minutes Prepared By: Marion Onolack, Secretary, Cochrane Regional Food Bank

Approved By: Gary Girard, President, Cochrane Regional Food Bank