

Wayne to Board by E-mail, Staff Copied, January 13, 2013

13/01/2014 1:41 PM

Re: Happy New Year from the Board - PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

Greetings Barry and Board:

Staff are also copied in this e-mail, as addressed in your e-mail.

TO STAFF: You are welcome to read the following response crafted very carefully by Esther and by me, since you all were first informed in e-mails of this sad situation by Barry Neufeld and the Board. I regret that. I neither encourage nor discourage your reading my response. It is your choice and your right.

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

Over the last few months I have received communication from the Board of M2/W2 and from others concerning myself, my wife and the work I have done on behalf of M2/W2 as the Executive Director. I am now officially requesting clarification concerning some of this communication, as well as asking some questions, and making some comments.

Points for clarification:

- In an e-mail sent to all Staff and copied to all Board members on January 10, 2014, Barry Neufeld stated: "... a complaint was forwarded to WorkSafeBC [WSBC] by a medical Professional attending to our contractor, Ms. Colette Squires." Please clarify: was the complaint filed by a medical practitioner (a chiropractor) or by Barry Neufeld, on behalf of M2/W2? Please forward a copy of the complaint by the medical professional to me.
- In this same e-mail Barry Neufeld stated: "WorkSafeBC has investigated the complaint and recently decided that Ms. Squires' contract does not cover her for injuries related to work." Did WSBC actually "investigate" this complaint? I have not been contacted by WSBC nor by any Board Member in investigation of this complaint. Or, was this complaint *dismissed* because Colette Squires' contract does not cover her for injuries related to work? Please clarify the above statement made by Barry Neufeld, with supporting documents.
- Will the claims on the "Employer's Report of Injury" faxed to WSBC on December 13, 2013 be adequately investigated and clarified? WSBC expects claims to be investigated by the employer *prior to a report being filed*. Yet a complaint was sent to WSBC with statements made about my wife and me, while no Board member has spoken to my wife or to me about what happened. That is, there was no Board investigation into these complaints.
- Neither does the form indicate: "The complainant states..." but is written as if the complaint made actually happened as indicated by Barry Neufeld, who filled out the WSBC report I have seen. The statements made in the WSBC report are untrue. It is unfortunate that the complaint was dismissed. It leaves a false impression with all those who have read the report, and those who have heard about the report, that it must be true that the Executive Director of M2/W2 (and

his wife) actually “bullied and harassed” Colette Squires. Please clarify how this claim by Colette Squires will be investigated in an unbiased way.

- Another clarification concerning this complaint is needed. Why were *four Staff members* initially sent this highly confidential report, December 12, 2013? The inaccurate claims were never clarified and are completely unsubstantiated, yet several Staff received the confidential complete report. Please clarify why there was such a serious breach of confidentiality about such serious unsubstantiated claims.

- As well, Barry Neufeld sent an e-mail to *all Staff and to all Board* December 13, 2013 that was “Recalled” December 14, 2013, stating to all Staff that “our association may soon be the subject of an investigation by the bullying and harassment division of WorkSafeBC”. Again: Please clarify why there was such a serious breach of confidentiality about such serious unsubstantiated claims, now sent to *all Staff*.

Without further details supplied, what may Staff be left thinking? I make this comment: *With all the information/communication that I have received and that has been given to others I have felt mistreated, slandered, bullied and harassed by Board members of M2/W2 as well as by Colette Squires.*

- The report filed with WSBC also states that the complainant’s work was to be modified and the worker “has been advised by the Board to reduce working hours at the office, to reduce the possibility of future harassment until the situation is resolved.” In fact, the worker has regularly continued to come into the office making it unsafe for me to work in the office for fear of further bullying and harassment, and untrue and unfounded allegations being made. Please clarify: Will the Board ask Colette Squires to not come into the office while I am there so that the workplace is safe for me? Otherwise, I will continue to work from home as done since January 6, 2014, since the workplace is toxic and unsafe for me with Colette Squires present.

- Staff are hurting, and the work of the agency is being hampered. Staff have also been excluded from all discussions about a new Executive Director, even though in the Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) signed by Barry Neufeld and Wayne Northey November 29, 2012 it was indicated that Staff would be included in collaborative decision making. The M.O.U. states: “We will include the Staff in a collaborative process *for* pending Board decisions that affect the agency before the Board meetings. This does not give Staff veto power over the Board.”

The Board has in fact discussed the appointment of a new ED without including Staff or the Executive Director. To be noted is information sent to me by Barry Neufeld (November 20, 2013) stating: “You are the outgoing executive director, and Colette may be the incoming director, at least on a temporary, interim, transitional basis. Power (aka influence, authority, validity) is already beginning to shift.” For clarification: How does Barry know something (“Power... is already beginning to shift”[obviously to Colette Squires]) so impactful on Staff and the agency, without Staff consultation according to the M.O.U., and according to the inviolable (see the M.O.U.) Board Policy Manual?

It is disappointing and rather unbelievable that I, as Executive Director of this agency for the past 16 years have never been asked anything about what is needed in a new ED, nor have Staff been consulted. (Even though we Staff represent over 120 years (excluding new Staff) of employment with this agency; and the involvement on the Board represents under 15 years (excluding new members). How sad is this?!

A new Executive Director needs to be collaborative, needs to have Staff who respect and agree with the appointment and with the person chosen. I would suggest the Board listen well to the Staff suggestions re this appointment. I need clarification for myself and the other Staff of M2/W2 about the process and plan for selection of a new ED. I so far have *not* been consulted.

- I am aware that Board meetings/discussions have taken place without my presence in contravention of the spirit and letter of the Board Policy Manual. Barry Neufeld gave “explanations” for this (in an e-mail dated December 12, 2013), to which I (in another e-mail from me dated December 12, 2013) voiced my disagreement *and* concomitant willingness to cooperate fully according to the Board Policy Manual. To hold an in-camera meeting is in direct contravention of the M.O.U. that Barry Neufeld and I signed in a mediated session on November 29, 2012. It stated: “We are committed to using the current Board Manual as our operating policy and procedure manual until we can review the Board Manual for affirmation and adjustments. (It is the mediator’s recommendation that a review of the Board manual would not take place during the current facilitated/mediated efforts or until such time as there is a demonstrated restored working relationship between Board and Staff based on mutual trust and good faith.)”

As well, the Board as a whole sent an e-mail dated December 13, 2013 to all Staff stating: “You may have heard that the Board will be meeting soon and no Staff will be included. While this appears to be contrary to the “Board Manual” we have carefully sought the advice of three organizations: the Canadian Council for Christian Charities, legal counsel from Kuhn LLP (regarding the Societies Act of BC) and WorkSafeBC.” I request that the Board forward to me this information and the dates the information was given to the Board by these three organizations.

Please clarify and assure me why I should trust that the Board of M2/W2 will carry out any agreements made, whether signed or not.

- On the issue of trust, it should be noted that Barry Neufeld and Cora Goodyear did not participate in the June 2013 exercise done by the mediator designed to move us forward. It encouraged those who wished to do so, to put their hands on the sticky notes we had written and then allow them to be discarded after prayer in a tangible act of moving forward. No explanation was given by them for non-participation, so one could presume they were possibly not open to “moving forward”. However in an e-mail sent to me by Barry Neufeld (November 20, 2013) Barry stated: “I declined to take part in the ‘hands on’ ritual, because as an Orthodox Deacon, I am forbidden to do this: such an act is restricted to bishops”. What is interesting about this communication from Barry Neufeld is that Barry is not as it turns out a Deacon in the Orthodox Church, nor are ‘hands on’ rituals restricted to Bishops. Both these statements have been confirmed to be untrue. How can one trust a Board member who makes such false statements?
- Further, on the issue of trust: at the last Board meeting (November 25, 2013) that I was allowed to attend, the Board permitted portions of an e-mail to be read that were addressed to my wife as “PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL” and sent inadvertently to Colette Squires. It had been forwarded by Colette Squires to the Board almost immediately (within 7 minutes!) upon her having received it. I immediately asked that Board members delete it without reading it as it was ‘PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL’ information (and twice designated as such) sent to my wife *for her eyes only*. Not only did some Board members not delete it, all Board members allowed the content to be discussed openly at the Board meeting. I felt betrayed and “crucified” that

evening, in spite of the fact that I had been assured by Darrel Schulz that he would not allow this to happen.

Please clarify why I should trust a Board that ignores my request to delete “PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL” information; that allows a diatribe against me concerning this “PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL” information to go on and on at a Board meeting; that has a person on it who directly contravenes a signed M.O.U.; that sends a report to WSBC without talking to all parties involved in the report; that rejects its own Board Policy Manual, etc.

- I have mentioned nothing of the allegations made against my wife in the WSBC Complaint filed. My wife has been a member of the M2/W2 Association for many years, has been integrally involved in the agency since 1980, is a current volunteer matched with a woman in FVI, has a huge heart for the ministry, and plans to continue as an active member of the M2/W2 Association. I have made it clear to the Board that I have always discussed, and that I continue to discuss issues of M2/W2 with her and she has supported and assisted me in my work for many years.

All Staff know this, and Esther’s involvement is such that Colette Squires addressed communication to her and to me in a letter dated November 18, 2013.

It was agreed (my usual practice) that I would send a *draft letter by e-mail November 19, 2013* to Esther about issues with Colette Squires for her comments prior to my discussing them face-to-face with a copy of the letter in Colette’s hand, with Lesley Harder again present (a norm by then *at my request*), with anyone else present if so wished by Colette Squires. This draft e-mail was inadvertently sent to Colette Squires.

On December 5, 2013 at the University of the Fraser Valley Esther responded spontaneously, quietly, privately, and respectfully to Colette Squires about disappointment in Colette Squires’ having read and then having immediately forwarded my November 19, 2013 e-mail with the draft letter to the Board. Esther indicated that the e-mail had a salutation addressed to her alone and signed off with “Love, Wayne”, and that the “Subject” of the e-mail contained in uppercase the words “PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL”. A brief discussion ensued.

Esther was shocked to say the least that a Board would send in a complaint to WSBC (filled out and signed by Barry Neufeld) without ever having spoken to her about that discussion. The WSBC document speciously claimed that Esther had made “a degrading personal, verbal attack” against Colette Squires “in a public venue.”

The document also speciously claimed, without any investigation by discussion with me, that the incident “began during a Board meeting October 28 when the worker disagreed with the Executive Director. Since then he has escalated his attempts to force her to agree with him, culminating in a degrading personal, verbal attack...” As if the two claims are connected. As if the only credible witness even to consult is Colette Squires. As if even the first part of the claim is credible when it is twisted into the opposite of the truth.

My comments: The worst form of a lie is a partial truth is the WorkSafeBC claim by Colette Squires supported by the Board. Worse: the Board's operative justice model in this matter was capricious: "guilty as charged with no common decency even to check with the accused parties".

Further, the Board's letter to me dated December 19, 2013 stated that it would not "apportion blame" then went on to claim that Esther had "scolded" Colette Squires and that Colette Squires had felt "publicly maligned". The letter then states that "we do want you to know of our serious disappointment in that event and trust you will take whatever steps are in your power to ensure that such an incident does not happen again"; and that "we would also appeal to your sense of integrity to take the initiative to help Esther Northey to make amends". Blame is apportioned by the Board throughout in that letter, besides there having been numerous uninvestigated false claims. It is unthinkable that the Board could make such definitive accusations and judgments (and many others in the letter) *without ever having spoken to Esther or myself. This is as sad as it is sick.*

Esther has filed numerous complaints with WSBC in her long career as a Nursing Instructor. She knows that *the procedure includes always checking out and investigating any and all sides of a complaint before submitting it to WSBC.* This did not happen in the case filed by Barry Neufeld on behalf of the Board! The complaint then is always written with indication that "the complainant states" or "the respondent states". There was none of that in the document filed with WorkSafeBC, *because there was no discussion whatsoever with the "respondents" (though full-bore definitive judgement!)*

It is indeed unfortunate that this complaint by the Board and Colette Squires, and information concerning it, having been forwarded to Staff, Board, and possibly others unknown to me, has now been dismissed without any investigation by WorkSafeBC. There needs to have been opportunity for "truth-telling" by Esther and by me. How now will this opportunity be provided in a fair and unbiased manner? *The Board has utterly disqualified itself as honest broker in such an investigation.* Yet Barry Neufeld's letter to all the Staff and copied to the Board dated January 10, 2014 states there will now be an internal process to deal with the "matter": "According to our new procedure, it will be dealt with by the Chair of our personnel committee, Mr. Darrel Schultz." What?! I need say no more.

As a result of the actions of Colette Squires and the actions of the Board of M2/W2, I am officially informing the Board that I have been advised not to meet directly with Colette Squires or any Board member of M2/W2 without my lawyer present. I have been advised that it would be unsafe for me to do so. I add with feeling: *I feel profoundly unsafe!*

Furthermore, as is my right under the 'Freedom of Information Act', I formally request that I immediately receive a copy of any and all written information the Board has concerning me, my actions, and the allegations made by Colette Squires against me. As well, I formally request that I receive a copy of all written information that the Board has about any meetings they have planned or had concerning me or have convened without a Staff person present. Please also forward to me all written copies of the advice that was stated to have been given by "three organizations: the Canadian Council for Christian Charities, legal counsel from Kuhn LLP (regarding the Societies Act of BC) and WorkSafeBC."

I expect the above clarifications and documents to be sent to me within a reasonable time frame, certainly by no later than January 24, 2014.

Thank you.

Wayne Northey
Executive Director

On 10/01/2014 11:13 AM, Barry Neufeld BCPOA President wrote:

Greetings and a Happy New Year to all the M2/W2 Team:

I have been out of the province for most of the past three weeks, and I hope to attend your next Staff meeting, which I understand is Wednesday, January 15, 2014. I am aware that there have been some questions raised regarding the recent involvement of WorkSafeBC, (formerly Worker's Compensation Board) and I hope to explain that to you.

The board met December 18 and implemented a new policy and procedures on Workplace Bullying and Harassment. I have attached both documents. This was done in response to two events. First of all On Nov 1, 2013 sections 115, 116, and 117 of the Workers Compensation Act of BC were amended requiring employers to immediately develop a policy statement and procedures on bullying and harassment. Since we had not yet done that, we needed to implement a policy as soon as possible. We simply endorsed the generic policy suggested by WorkSafeBC. I apologize that due to the urgency, we were not able to consult widely with staff. However, you will note that the policy is to be reviewed annually, commencing April 30, 2014, and at that time we will solicit staff input and fine tune the policy to our specific circumstances. WorkSafe BC also requires that employers provide training to Staff regarding the new regulations. A link to a helpful video is here:

<http://www2.worksafebc.com/Publications/Multimedia/Videos.asp?ReportID=37265>

Secondly as you may be aware, a complaint was forwarded to WorkSafeBC by a medical Professional attending to our contractor, Ms. Colette Squires. WorkSafeBC makes this mandatory, and employers are not to discourage employees or contractors or their attending medical professionals from filing a complaint. WorkSafeBC has investigated the complaint and recently decided that Ms. Squires' contract does not cover her for injuries related to work. Therefore, we may deal with the matter internally. According to our new procedure, it will be dealt with by the Chair of our personnel committee, Mr. Darrel Schultz.

As a board, we are aware of how the recent unpleasant events have discouraged and disheartened everyone. We want to emphasize how much we appreciate all your efforts and we want to assure

you that we are attempting to move our Association forward. A transitional leadership plan is being developed and we will involve all the staff at an appropriate time.

If no one objects, I would be pleased to forward to anyone who requests, a draft copy of the minutes of our last Board Meeting, Dec 18, 2013.

"Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it with the handle of anxiety or the handle of faith." ~ Henry Ward Beecher

IN HIM

Barry Neufeld, M2/W2 co-chair