

FDRIO
AGM SPEECH
November 16, 2020

Good morning everyone.

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Neil Maisel and I am the chair of FDRIO.

We have a full agenda today and I want to make sure we end our AGM well prior to the start of this amazing conference. So with that, I would like to call to order the FDRIO 2020 AGM.

As the Global pandemic has not allowed us to meet in person this year we are asking you to use the polling feature of Zoom for your votes on the various items that will come up.

Our last AGM was held on November 18, 2019. The minutes of that AGM are up on the screen.

I trust that you have all had the opportunity to review the minutes.

Please use the voting feature to register whether or not you approve of the minutes.

I want to recognize two Directors whose terms are expiring at this AGM, Brahm Siegel and Hilary Linton. Brahm, thank you for your efforts on behalf of FDRIO, including the area of complaints, which you have handled incredibly well.

Hilary, I know that Lorne will be making some comments when you receive the Crowe Soberman award of excellence. I don't want to steal his thunder, so I will simply say thank you, thank you, thank you. You have been (and no doubt will continue to be) a driving force in the success of FDRIO.

I would ask for a big round of applause for Brahm and Hilary.

Thank you both.

The FDRIO board of directors is, by far, the hardest working board of directors I have ever been involved with. They bring a diverse skill set to the table and each contributes in their own way.

I am very proud to be on the board of directors of this great organization.

In addition to Brahm and Hilary, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the following people who formed the FDRIO board of directors in 2019/2020:

Jennifer Daudlin

Raheena Dahya

Julie Gill

Laura Bradford

Mary Lee

Vicki Ringuette

Linda Ennis

Akbar Ebrahim

Matthew Krofchick

Lorne Wolfson

Please join me in recognizing their efforts with a big round of applause.

Thank you Board.

The nominating committee has put forward the proposed slate of directors for 2020/2021.

The slate is on the screen and includes the 10 people I just mentioned, myself and two newcomers, Nick Esterbauer and Avagene Skervin.

Again, please use your polling buttons to record your vote.

Thank you.

This past year, our Executive committee has been amazing. They provided incredible support to me in my role as chair and to the members at large.

They included-Julie Gill, Hilary Linton, Laura Bradford, Akbar Ebrahim and Lorne Wolfson.

Please join me in recognizing the efforts of the executive committee with a big round of applause.

Thank you.

This year's executive committee will include Julie Gill, Laura Bradford, Vicky Ringuette, Akbar Ebrahim and Lorne Wolfson. I

look forward to working with all of you to ensure that FDRIO keeps up its great name and high standards.

FDRIO has always been incredibly lucky to have a great head of our sponsorship committee - Lorne Wolfson.

Again, this year in the face of a global pandemic, Lorne has managed to convince the vast majority of our loyal sponsors to sponsor our conference.

Please give Lorne a big round of applause.

A list of the sponsors will be rolling throughout the day, but I would just like to take a moment to thank all of them for their incredibly generous support:

So, thank you:

1. Brayden Supervision
2. Grant Crawford LLP
3. Crowe Soberman LLP
4. Davis Martindale
5. Duff & Phelps
6. Divorcemate Software Inc.
7. Fuller Landau LLP
8. Gene C Colman Family Law
9. Hull and Hull LLP

10. Krofchick Valuations
11. McCabe Valuations
12. Nathens Siegel LLP
13. Riverdale Mediations
14. Torkin Manes
15. AFCC-O
16. ADRIO
17. The Law Society of Ontario
18. APFM
19. Settify
20. Our Family Wizard, and
21. Osgoode-York University

Please give a huge round of applause to our sponsors.

When I was preparing my report from the chair for 2020, I was thinking about the type of speech I should give. I narrowed it down to 3 possibilities:

1. A speech about how difficult the Coronavirus has made life for all of us including FDRIO.
2. A concession speech, on the assumption that everyone has the right to hear at least one concession speech in the first two weeks of November every four years.
3. A speech about how FDRIO has flourished in 2020.

I was going to ask you to do polling to decide which speech you wanted to hear, but I was afraid that you would choose the concession speech, so I am going to pass on that idea.

I am happy to report that FDRIO has flourished in 2020.

It started with us having the Attorney General of Ontario, The Honourable Doug Downey, as the keynote speaker at our last conference.

We have expanded our membership from about 220 last year at this time to about 280. That represents more than a 25% increase in membership. That is truly an unbelievable accomplishment, especially in a global pandemic.

What did we do to deserve 60 additional members this year?
Well, quite simply - a lot of great stuff.

Shortly after the conference, we held the first Practicum, led by Hilary Linton, Cathryn Paul and the many coaches that participated. It was such a huge success that we did it again this year.

In February, a number of us, including Lorne Wolfson, Matt Krofchick, Brahm Siegel and I did a presentation with The Canadian Institute of Chartered Business Valuators. It went so well that they immediately asked us to do another one.

From November 2019 to March 2020, we provided a series of top-notch monthly webinars. Thanks to Nick Esterbauer for all his hard working in making those happen.

We continue to produce a Platinum Newsletter. If there was a hall of fame for newsletters, ours would certainly be in it. Thank you to Anne Marie Predko, Kimberley Brown, Hilary Linton, Sola Aina, Sylvia Basso and Victoria Tundo for all of your hard work. That newsletter is a must read for everyone.

In the middle of March, Covid-19 hit us all hard. I will tell you that the FDRIO board of directors was quite anxious about FDRIO's future. We held a number of emergency meetings.

Notwithstanding the doom and gloom and uncertainty that the pandemic was causing, FDRIO took the bull by the horns and moved into an even higher gear (if that was possible).

We held a town hall meeting on March 25 (yes, that's right, ten days after the Province shut down). More than 200 people attended this incredible event. Huge kudo's to Hilary Linton, Vicki Ringuette, Laura Bradford and the many presenters. If you did not attend the town hall, you missed one of our most informative webinars.

We then held a leading edge Indigenous webinar which was given by Kayla Viau and Linda Nothing. That too was incredibly informative. Thank you to Kayla and Linda.

The Executive Committee and Board began to meet more frequently to ensure that we were meeting the needs of our members. We decided to ramp up our previously monthly webinars (thanks again to Nick Esterbauer for handling these) and provided many webinars for dealing with issues that arose out of Covid-19, including a how to use Zoom webinar provided by our resident zoom expert Vicky Ringuette. Thank you Vicki, that was a really important webinar you provided to us.

In a totally unexpected, but very rewarding outcome, our membership began to grow even faster during the Covid-19 outbreak (yes, you heard me correctly, while most of the Ontario economy had come to a screeching halt, we began to gain members). I did my own little survey of a couple of members who I knew had joined. One of them described our webinars as “timely and relevant” and listed that as the reason she decided to join.

In the face of adversity, FDRIO did what is always does-put our noses to the grindstone and work harder to provide our members with even more benefits.

Our Unconference was originally scheduled for May but had to be changed from an in person conference to a virtual conference on the fly. As usual, it was an excellent conference. A big thank you to Matt Krofchick, Trish Blake and Tricia James Wong for putting the Unconference together.

We launched our Qualified Family Arbitration Screener or “Qfas” designation on July 1. That involved a lot of work for Laura

Bradford, Hilary Linton, Clayton Spencer and Judith Nicoll and I would like to acknowledge their efforts. Thank you.

We continued to foster our relationships with students at both York and Humber. We prepared 9 student webinars, led by Mary Lee and Laura Bradford. Thank you ladies. To the students that have joined FDRIO this year, welcome aboard. You are with the right organization to help build your career in Family ADR. FDRIO wants to help support you as much as possible. Mary Lee is leading our student strategy with assistance from Marie Nickle. We expect that you will hear more about this in the coming months. Who knows, maybe one day one of the students attending this conference will be standing (err sitting) up here giving the Report of the Chair at our AGM.

As FDRIO was fortunately growing rapidly and providing even more quality services to our members, we decided in April to bring on Laura Bradford as our interim executive director. This definitely ranks as one of the best decisions FDRIO has ever made. Laura, you have been an immense asset to FDRIO. Thank you.

We started the Voice of the Child Committee which is being capably led by Rachel Birnbaum and Jared Norton. Thank you, we look forward to your report in the near future.

We created a diversity and inclusion committee which is led by Raheena Dahya. I am on that committee and I can tell you that if

you are interested in diversity and inclusion, that is a committee you must join. Thank you Raheena.

And that has led us to today. This great conference that we are about to enjoy was originally supposed to take place at the Novotel downtown. The same location as last year. When Covid-19 showed up, this was obviously not going to be possible. Other organizations decided to cancel their 2020 conferences, but not FDRIO. With the incredible leadership of our conference co-chairs, Jennifer Daudlin and Raheena Dahya, you obviously know that we switched the conference to a virtual conference. Jennifer and Raheena have put together an outstanding program for us today. So, to them, their conference committee members and the many presenters, thank you so much for your efforts.

As usual, Tricia James Wong has provided outstanding administrative support to FDRIO this year. Tricia, a thousand thank yous would not be enough to let you know how much we appreciate your efforts.

As you can see, there have been many people who have stepped up to the plate for FDRIO in 2020. I would ask you to join me in a huge round of applause for them.

I want to personally thank 3 long serving directors - Hilary Linton, Akbar Ebrahim and Lorne Wolfson. The three of them and myself were original directors of FDRIO in 2014.

Hilary, I just wanted to thank you again for all of your hard work and efforts on behalf of FDRIO.

Akbar, thank you for keeping our books and records immaculate as usual. As a bean counter myself, I truly appreciate that I do not have to worry about the shape of our books and records with you at the helm.

Lorne, thank you for all of your continued guidance as past chair. You have always been there to answer my questions, whether they be smart ones or not so smart ones.

So a special thank you from me to the 3 of you.

I also want to recognize our banker and auditor who are here today. Benjamin Reiss of RBC and Rick Wronzberg of WKRZ LLP thank you for your ongoing support.

I would now like to review the June 30, 2020 financial statements with you. They are on the screen. Don't worry, I won't bore you with a detailed review.

Any questions on the financial statements? Please use your polling buttons to vote to approve them.

Thank you.

The board is proposing that we appoint WKRZ LLP as our auditors next year. Please use the polling buttons to vote.

Thank you

I would now ask Lorne Wolfson to introduce this year's winner of the Crowe Soberman Award. Lorne.

Is there any other business to attend to? If not, I would like to close the FDRIO 2020 AGM.

Thank you