

SHALOM COUNSELLING SERVICES INC.

Agenda of the Annual Meeting for 2024/2025

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 5:00 p.m.

Shalom office and Zoom

AGENDA

1. Welcome, confirm quorum and call the meeting to order – Helen Eby
2. Approval of the minutes of the previous AGM – February 19, 2025
3. Chairperson's Report – Helen Eby (page 2)
4.
 - a. Treasurer's Report – Sara Cressman (page 4)
 - b. Auditor's Report and Audited Financial Statements
 - c. Budget Approval (2025/2026): Operating budget
 - d. Appointment of Auditors for 2025/2026
5. Committee Reports 2024/2025 (page 4)
6. Appointment of:
 - a. Officers
 - b. Directors
7. By-law amendments
8. Motion to Endorse 2024/2025 Board Actions
9. Other business
10. Adjournment

MOTIONS

for the Annual Meeting of
SHALOM COUNSELLING SERVICES INC.
Wednesday February 18, 2026

2. Motion: To approve the minutes of February 19, 2025
3. Motion: To accept the Chairperson's Report as printed
- 4 a. Motion: To accept the Treasurer's Report as printed
- 4 b. Motion: To accept the Auditor's report and 2024/2025 audited financial statements of SCS Inc.
- 4 c. Motion: To accept the Operating Budget for 2025/2026 as presented
- 4 d. Motion: To appoint auditors for 2025/2026
5. Motion: To accept the Committee Reports as printed
- 6 a. Motion: To appoint the Officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) as presented.
- 6 b. Motion: To appoint all new and continuing Directors
7. Motion: To accept the amended by-laws as printed
8. Motion: That all acts, contracts, by-laws, proceedings, appointments, elections and payments exacted, made, done, and taken by the Directors and Officers of the Corporation, referred to in the minutes of the Board of Directors of the Corporation, be and the same are hereby approved, ratified and confirmed.
9. Motion regarding other business as presented
10. Motion to Adjourn

3. Chairperson's Report

The Strategic Plan for Shalom Counselling continues to serve as Shalom's guide to continue to move the organization forward. We reached its half-way point in the 5-year plan, and reconfirmed the elements of the plan, noting that additional work is now required on our financial position. We also held discussion on how to determine the right size for Shalom, the fourth strategy in our plan.

Actions achieved to support the Strategic Plan continued, including the updating of the website. The Executive Director has developed a relationship with a Muslim Social Services organization through Shalom's involvement with the Counselling Collaborative partnership. Education on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion have been held with staff.

Fundraising has become the top priority of our Strategic Plan for this year. A fundraising strategy plan was developed, a workshop on fundraising offered by Capacity Canada was attended, and connections with other fundraisers in the community have been developed. A generous local donor offered to temporarily fund a fundraiser position which led to a proposal and a plan to hire a fundraiser. This will begin in 2025-2026.

The Board held its first joint meeting with the Development Advisory Committee (DAC) to maintain and foster a good relationship, and synergy in focus for the organization. This will continue as an annual meeting in coming years.

Board Procedures and Efficiency

The Board has fulfilled its responsibilities as outlined in Board policies. It met six times during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Scheduled compliance reports were received from the Executive Director on areas of organizational performance including maintenance of professional standards, asset protection, and service activity. The Board received, considered and approved the annual budget, quarterly financial statements and the annual financial audit. Committees reported to the Board, bringing recommendations arising from their deliberations for consideration and approval.

As a result of last year's board self-evaluation, the Board has focused on more time for strategic discussions. A consent agenda was discussed and implemented for a trial period to achieve more efficiency of board time. Previous board meeting and committee meetings, non-controversial compliance reports and a written report from the Executive Director are all items that can be approved at one time as part of the consent agenda. If an item needs more discussion, it can be removed from the consent agenda and appropriate discussion can take place. In addition, a Declaration of Conflict of Interest was also added to the beginning of each meeting agenda. Education sessions are included in most agendas on topics that came up through the self-evaluation.

In September 2025, the rental lease with Erb Street Mennonite Church was renewed for the next 5 years.

Balance of Shalom Activity and Finances

Details of counselling activity and finances are discussed in the financial reports and the Executive Director report in Annual Report 2024/2025. Some of the trends include an increased waitlist, changeover of staffing during the past year, ending the year with a deficit, and an increase in sessions which are requiring subsidy. Within a small not-for-profit organization, any vacant positions or staff illnesses, can result in less clients seen and therefore reduced client fees. To address these trends, there will be a small change in the fee structure and management of the waitlist to balance paying and non-paying clients, as well as more fundraising with the assistance of the fundraiser position.

Change to Wanda's Counselling Care Fund

At the Spring Brunch in May 2025, the Counselling Care Fund was relaunched with a new name—Bridging the Gap Fund, which will be used to subsidize counselling sessions to support everyone who is unable to afford counselling sessions on their journey of healing.

Every day, people in our community are reaching out for help—seeking peace, hope, and a safe space to begin healing. Too often, there's a gap between the need for mental health supports and the ability to afford it. This fund supports individuals who can't afford counselling, helping make mental health care accessible when it's needed most. Over the next two years, we aim to raise \$60,000 annually for the Fund. A donor from the community has committed a generous lead gift of \$20,000 per year for the next two years. Thanks to their support and other partnering donors, great progress has been made on this goal.

Appreciation to staff, volunteers and donors

The Board continues to appreciate and thank the wonderful team of staff for their highly competent, committed and caring service they provide for the clients of Shalom.

I have appreciated the commitment of all of the board members. This year Allan Sauder and Katie Steckly have completed their volunteer terms. We thank them for their years of service and their expertise they provided for the Shalom Board and its committees. This past year, Julie Heimpel was welcomed to the Board to fill a vacant position.

Shalom continues to need and appreciate the generous donors in our community to carry out its vision of creating “a community of peace and wellness where all can thrive”. With the support of our community, Shalom will continue to be strong, flexible, and resilient in the years to come and will make a positive difference in supporting individuals and families who are affected by mental health needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Eby, Board Chair

4a. Treasurer's Report

Shalom Counselling has a modest budget and is able to accomplish a lot. Thanks to the generous financial support received from individuals and organizations in the form of donations, grants, and client fees, Shalom is able to carry out its mission to those in need.

Over 70% of Shalom's counselling sessions have reduced fees, with some fees fully waived for those with the most need. Only with generous donors and grant organizations, can counselling be accessible to all people regardless of income levels. The Operating/General Fund Revenues decreased 8% to \$906,538 due to decreases in client fees and grants. Fortunately, there were increased donations. Total Operating/General Fund expenses remained at last year's levels. The overall result was a deficit of \$86,530. We are grateful to existing reserves to cover the shortfall. Plans for the next year include a focus on fundraising and modest increases to client fees to improve revenues and ensure financial sustainability.

A total of \$52,948 was drawn from the Bridging the Gap Fund (formerly Wanda's Counselling Care Fund) to help offset a portion of the fee reductions to those in need. The audited financial statements are available upon request.

Thank you to Shalom's staff for their careful stewardship of these donations, the Development Advisory Committee for their fundraising work and Erb Street Mennonite Church for their generous support as Shalom's landlord.

Sara Cressman, Board Treasurer

5. Committee Reports 2024/2025

The following excerpt, from the Shalom Policy and Procedures manual outlines the role and function of board committees:

BOARD COMMITTEES

The purpose of the Board Committees is to facilitate the work of the Board by providing focus on specific areas of SCS Inc. activities. Board Committees are sub-committees of the board with specific agendas. Members of a Committee are available to reference with the Executive Director as needed. Meetings may be set at the discretion of the Executive Director and members of each Committee. Committees report to the Board at each Board meeting, and between meetings as needed.

The Board of Directors will be responsible for appointing its members to the various committees (except for the Executive Committee which is made up of the Board officers) and the Committee members may select their Chairperson and Secretary. Each committee will appoint a Chair. The Executive Director may draft an agenda for meetings and will have this approved by the Chair prior to circulating to the Committee. Meeting minutes will be recorded by the Executive Director or designate.

Executive Committee Report 2024/2025

In 2024-2025, the Executive Committee met five times. Members of the Executive Committee 2024-2025 included Helen Eby (Chair), Paul Fast (Vice-Chair), Margaret Andres (Secretary) and Sara Cressman (Treasurer). Susan Schwartzentruber (Executive Director) is an ex officio member.

According to policy, the Executive Committee is responsible for 5 basic functions and progress on each of these functions will be described below.

1. Review of Executive Director's Performance

During this year, a full performance review was conducted under the leadership of the Executive Committee including an appreciative inquiry participation from staff and a survey by all of the board members. The results of this review were very positive and unanimous, showing that Susan does an excellent job leading and supporting her team, working with the board, and reaching into the community. As per policy, the Executive Director's salary was approved by the Executive Committee.

2. Strategic Planning

At each meeting, progress towards the strategic plan is reviewed. During this year, the focus on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) was continued. The fundraising strategy became more important this year due to an increase in potential deficits. A generous donor has come forward to temporarily fund a new fundraiser position for Shalom which will be in place during the next year. Executive Committee assisted with the approval of a proposal and job description for the fundraiser position. A fundraising workshop took place, hosted by Capacity Canada, which the Executive Director and Board Chair attended. Other connections have also been made with other fundraising positions within the community.

3. Board Self-Evaluation

The Vice-Chair undertook the process of conducting a board self-evaluation, in which all board members participated. To make the Board meetings as productive as possible it was recommended that one strategic item would be discussed at each board meeting. It was recommended that the process of the Executive Director performance review be updated as well as the job description of the Executive Director. To improve board efficiency, the practice of consent agendas was validated to allow for more valuable time dedicated to strategic discussions. Board education topics suggested were update on the mental health sector, legal and fiduciary responsibilities and risk management, and conflict of interest. All of the suggestions made through the self-evaluation process are underway.

4. Policy 1 By-Laws are to be reviewed on behalf of the Board every two years.

This will be done through the work of the Policy and Professional Practice Committee of the Board. The use of Artificial Intelligence is being introduced for administrative work, and a policy is being developed to guide this introduction. Other policies that have been updated include the receipt and documentation of bequest so that consistency is maintained.

5. New Board Directors

The role of the Executive Committee is to oversee the nomination of new Board members as needed. At the end of the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the Board said good-bye to Allan Sauder and Katie Steckly as their terms were coming to an end. One new board member that joined us this year is Julie Heimpel.

A regular meeting occurs between the Executive Director and the Board Chair to review actions and discussions from board meetings, to plan agendas for future meetings and to provide supervision for the Executive Director as needed.

Thank you to each of the members of the Executive Committee for their commitment and expertise throughout the past year.

Finance Committee Report 2024/2025

The Finance Committee is responsible to oversee SCS Inc. administrative and financial activities. This includes responsibility for financial management, audit, budget, and insurance matters. The Treasurer will be a member of the Finance Committee. The Executive Director and Business & Operations Administrator are the primary staff contacts for this committee. The Finance Committee meets at a minimum three times per year.

Members of the Finance Committee 2024-2025: Sara Cressman (Chair), Margaret Andres, and Julie Heimpel. Staff: Susan Schwartzenruber and Greg Chandler Burns.

Highlights of the Finance Committee 2024-2025:

The Finance Committee met three times during the fiscal year.

The first meeting of this fiscal year was on December 13, 2024. The purpose of this meeting was primarily to meet with Shalom's external auditor, Ed Simon of E.M. Simon, CPA, Professional Corporation. Ed reviewed the audited financial statements, noting nearly \$1 million in revenue, several routine adjustments (including payroll accruals, interest allocations, and a bequest), and confirmed the audit resulted in a clean report. The committee recommended approval of the draft audited statements and the reappointment of Ed Simon as auditor for the 2025 fiscal year. The committee also discussed lease renewal negotiations with Erb St. Mennonite Church, including a proposed five-year lease with a stepped rent increase to ease financial impact.

At its June 10, 2025 meeting, the committee reviewed financials. Regulatory filings were confirmed as up to date, the Spring Brunch was reported as a successful donor stewardship event, and a 1.6% cost-of-living increase was recommended for board approval. The sliding fee scale was reviewed, emphasizing balance across fee levels and ongoing therapist-client discussions, while efforts to replenish the Bridge the Gap Fund continue with a focus on returning donors. The signed lease with Erb St. Mennonite Church and the initial 2025/2026 budget draft were discussed, highlighting salaries as the primary expense and options for

financial adjustment. The committee also supported several policy updates, including thresholds for undesignated bequests, reserve targets, revisions to the Counselling Care Fund policy, and updated asset protection limits.

At its meeting on September 3, 2025, the committee reviewed financials and year-end projections and suggested some adjustments to these projections. A year-end fundraising approach was discussed, with caution raised about over-engaging donors through multiple communications. For the 2025/2026 budget, the committee recommended setting operating donations at a midpoint of \$240,000, supported the simplified compliance report, and advised keeping a potential fundraising position out of the budget until formally approved. Updates were provided on the Bridging the Gap Fund, fee schedule adjustments (including a \$5 increase across fees), recent grant applications, and the recommendation to bring the revised fee schedule to the board for approval. The committee also discussed investment movements, reserve funds, and audit planning updates, including clearer separation of client fees and endowment disclosures.

Policy and Professional Standards Committee Report 2024/2025

Members of the Policy and Professional Standards Committee 2024-2025: Carla Santomero (chair), Karen Martin, Helen Eby. Staff: Susan Schwartzentruber and Greg Chandler Burns.

Highlights of the Policy and Professional Standards Committee 2024-2025:

Shalom Counselling Services holds four distinct governing policies:

Policy 1: Board Policies

Policy 2: Management of Executive Director

Policy 3: General Organizational Policies

Policy 4: Human Resource Policies

Each year, two of the four policies undergo an in-depth review, alternating the following year. In addition, this committee is also available to support and advise on non-scheduled reviews of policies as need arises.

The committee focused on Policy 2 and Policy 3.

The proposed changes were a result of focusing on reviewing and updating policies to provide clarity to ensure they are relevant in the changing environment in which we live and work. The committee made revisions to improve the tone of the policies to provide a more positive context on the actions we will take rather than those we will avoid. Other changes reflected the work that the organization undertook during our strategic planning and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion assessment.

In reviewing Policy 2: Management of the Executive Director prominent changes included addressing the role and responsibilities of the ED to ensure it was reflective of the current

context. Proposed changes included changing probationary period for the ED to allow for timely feedback, and addressing the job description for the ED

Overall themes in reviewing Policy 3: General Organizational Policies included changing language to reflect a positive approach, addressing outdated language in regards to data systems, updating information in relation to Maintenance of Professional Standards, and rewording language involving different counselling contexts.

Thank you to staff and board members for their attention to detail as well as organizational scope in their review of these documents.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The Board of Directors may from time to time establish a temporary or standing Committee for the purpose of investigating, reporting on or otherwise dealing with specific areas of interest and concern of the SCS Inc. Such Committees shall be appointed by the Board of Directors and shall operate within such terms and references provided by the Board.

Development Advisory Committee Report 2024/2025

Purpose: The role of the Development Advisory Committee (DAC) is to generate ideas, build relationships and advise the Board of Directors on constituency relations, marketing, communications, and fundraising.

Accountability: The Development Advisory Committee reports to the Board of Directors. The DAC is chaired by a member of the Board of Directors who is appointed by the Board and acts as a liaison between the DAC and the Board. The Business and Operations Director is the primary staff contact for this committee. These meetings are also attended by the Executive Director.

Committee Composition: In addition to the chair, other members of the Board of Directors may be appointed to the DAC at the discretion of the Board. Other members will be solicited from the community. People with skills in the areas of marketing, communications, and fundraising will be recruited. All those serving on the DAC must be appointed by the Board of Directors.

Members of the Development Advisory Committee 2024-2025: Katie Steckly (chair), Laverne Brubacher, Jim Erb, Ed Nowak, Ben Shantz. Staff: Susan Schwartzentruber and Greg Chandler Burns.

Highlights of the Development Advisory Committee 2024-2025:

In 2024-2025 the DAC continued to bring guidance, creativity, and expertise to Shalom's development and donor relations. The team met every few months on Zoom to discuss Shalom's operations and annual fundraising activities, including the Spring Brunch and 10,000 Steps walk. Throughout the year the committee received updates regarding Shalom's

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operations and financial situation, as well as that of the broader counselling landscape in the Region of Waterloo. The DAC considered ways to connect with donors, new and old, and with the public at large.

The annual Spring Brunch fundraiser was held on Saturday, May 3rd, 2025, at Golf's Steak House & Seafood in Kitchener. Attendees enjoyed a catered meal, while staff were able to connect with attendees about the work of Shalom and its impact on the community. Advertising for the event was done by: Staff and Board Members selling tickets, announcements sent to Churches to be broadcast in bulletins, spring fundraising letters sent to donor mailing list and email invitations and reminders sent to Shalom's email list. This effort resulted 140 attendees at the Spring Brunch. Of those 34 complementary tickets were provided (12 for sponsors, 11 were for staff, and the remaining 11 were for speakers and special guests). There was a total of 106 full price tickets sold. The theme of the Brunch was "Voices for Change - Healing in Community Responding to Gender-Based Violence". This was a theme suggested by Susan Schwartzenruber seeing trends in the community and Shalom's clients and allowing a panel discussion. Panel members were Jennifer Hutton, CEO of Women's Crisis Services, Grace Ibrahima, writer and author and Amy Hachborn, Sergeant, Intimate Partner Violence Team, Waterloo Regional Police Services. Helen also launched our renewed Bridging the Gap Fund which will be used to subsidize counselling sessions. Overall, the Spring Brunch was successful in connecting with Shalom's supporters and raising funds for Shalom's work.

On September 20, 2025, Shalom hosted the annual 10,000 Steps For Mental Health Fundraiser. This year's fundraiser also included live music during the pre-walk program, and food was provided in the Shalom parking lot following the walk as well. The event had a turnout of 90 total participants and as of September 30th, participants had raised \$51,700.00 from 299 donors with an average amount of \$168.39. Once again, 10,000 Steps for Mental Health was a very successful fundraiser for Shalom, and a wonderful opportunity to connect with Shalom's supporters, and the wider community.