



Vancouver Island Human Rights Committee

April 18, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Minutes prepared by
VIHRC Recording Secretary Kay Ahmadi

Released Unofficially: August 18, 2013
Adopted Officially: September 12, 2013

Attendance

Boardroom: Daniel Girard, Kay Ahmadi, Maddalena Maher, Mark Miller, Michael Doerfler, Michelle Ratsoy, Rezia Khan, Virginia Vaillancourt & PSAC Rep: None.

Teleconference: Tracy Shudo.

Translators: Jen Ferris & Mary Butterfield.

Regrets: None.

Meeting – Call to Order

VIHRC Acting President Michael Doerfler called this meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Roundtable Introductions

The members in the attendance did their introductions to each other as part of the opening round table conversations.

Old Business for Review

Adoption of February 19, 2013 VIHRC Meeting Minutes:

A review of previous meeting minutes took place at this time.

Motion: Virginia Vaillancourt made the motion to accept the previous minutes.

Seconded: Daniel Girard.

Carried: Unanimously.

New Business

Treasurer's Report:

VIHRC Treasurer Daniel Girard provided a financial summary of the committees' chequing and equity accounts for the months of February 2013 and March 2013.

Motion: Kay Ahmadi made the motion to accept the financial reports with the amendment to the date on the March 2013 report.

Seconded: Maddalena Maher

Carried: Unanimously.

Human Rights General News:

VIHRC Technical Communications Michael Doerfler provided the members with a printout package of interesting human right news stories as posted from VIHRC facebook group or PSAC HRNN facebook page.

Maddalena Maher referred to the story about BC mental health system failing teens - She had just been assisting an 18 year old homeless young man. At 16, they are fazed out of the child and youth mental health system. At 19, they are eligible for the adult services but there is no help available for the young people between the ages of 16 and 19.

There are lots of agencies but none of them communicate with each other. Public health, mental health, hospital social work, family physician - they are all fragmented and they do not seem to communicate with each other at all. You can have a youth sitting in someone's office and no one asks that person if they have a place to live or money. It is expected the person with mental illness can navigate the system on their own. It is good that we have this report from Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, but she is talking about new things, we need to aware that there was very little to begin with and they do not take into account the culture differences.

A member asked if there was a place where people with mental illness could go to and we were told there is a place but it only has 18 beds and this facility covers the whole province of BC!

A member described how they have been trying to get some help for the last six years for a young man and for years the physicians associated the problems to be growing pains and would do nothing.

Virginia Vaillancourt mentioned that recently the Vancouver General Hospital received a single donation of \$12 million from a family to build a new mental health facility in Vancouver which will not be ready until 2017 and it will cost \$82 million to build. Each person will have their own room, with their own bed and toilet. There will also be outdoor facilities where they can go and enjoy their surrounding but still be in the facility. The present facilities, people share rooms and the toilet is at the end of the hall, it does not give them the opportunity to recover properly.

Virginia Vaillancourt also talked about "Kimberleyslaw.com" - a young Vancouver Island girl had been killed by two young men (16 & 17 year olds) in 2010. The family has been advocating for reform to prevent what happened to Kimberly Proctor to another person and they have been communicating with a lawyer. Many issues came to light during the investigation and court process and the family made note of the changes needed to be done in the provincial and federal regulations in regard to young offenders.

A discussion took place about bullying and how it is happening everywhere - even in the workplace and nothing is being done. It was mentioned that the prime minister referred to bullying is a crime.

New PSAC Victoria RO Accessibility:

Virginia Vaillancourt advised the members that an email was sent to the human right committee members asking for suggestions/recommendations which could be forwarded to PSAC prior to the move.

A printout of the suggestions/recommendations was provided to the members. These suggestions were forwarded to regional co-ordinator Luc Guevremont in Vancouver and to REVP Bob Jackson. Virginia Vaillancourt had a meeting with Luc Guevremont prior to her surgery in regard to the list and was told some are doable and will be done but they need to check on the international symbol of accessibility as there are certain guidelines regarding with using this symbol.

Regarding the pathway to photocopy area - it is accessible but the photocopy room will be closed when PSAC staff are not available or the office is closed. The boardroom will be blocked off from the PSAC office and will only be accessible by the door in the hallway.

The move will be taking place on June 1, 2013. Luc Guevremont met with the holding company representative and the designer sent by PSAC on March 18, 2013 but Virginia Vaillancourt was not able to attend that meeting due to her surgery. Luc Guevremont sent her a email on April 4, 2013 stating the suggestions/recommendations were forwarded to the holding company representative and PSAC and they felt a lot of them could be done except for making the cabinets in the kitchen adjustable. This cannot be done through PSAC. Virginia Vaillancourt felt this is important as we need to consider all our members and stated while visiting the Vancouver office after her surgery she could not access the upper cabinets due to it being too high and too wide. Virginia Vaillancourt stated she will go through the list again and contact Luc Guevremont to discuss what will be done and challenge the recommendations that were rejected.

Virginia Vaillancourt stated even before we knew we were moving we had talked about a flashing light above the intercom system to notify the person in the office that someone was downstairs if they did not hear the phone ringing. At one meeting, Michael Doerfler was alone in the office and he had to keep going up and down the stairs to see if someone was at the door. This is not making the office accessible to all members. Virginia Vaillancourt will also ask that the fire alarm be both visual and audible and door to open automatically to help people with mobility issues.

Daniel Girard stated he spoke with Luc Guevremont a few days ago and he was firm about the cupboards, they had to be standard to eliminate the cost of having a specialized unit made. Virginia Vaillancourt stated she will do some research on the cabinets and find out what the cost would be as the holding company is providing PSAC with some funding assistance for the renovation and move.

Mark Miller advised the members the upper cabinets are generally standard. We do not need a special cabinet, what we need is a drop down counter balance shelving unit that would be attached to the inside of the cabinet, so when someone need access to it, it can be lowered down to them - it is spring loaded so it goes back up when they are finished and is considered an add on fixture.

Daniel Girard also mentioned that we need to think about how we can evacuate the building with a person in a wheelchair and not wait for the first responders to bring them down.

Virginia Vaillancourt stated another thing we need is an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) machine in our office.

Victoria Pride Parade:

Virginia Vaillancourt stated in our last meeting, we talked about having a multi-union pride and how we had not been able to get a multi-union pride created, so a suggestion was made that we do a multi committee pride from the island. Michael Doerfler sent an email to the area council, human right, women, youth committees and the north island area council.

Virginia Vaillancourt also participated at the recent area council meeting via phone and found out a member has a cool little pirate ship which is being used strictly for variety kids. Based on the conversation at the area council, it was suggested doing a float or VIHRC getting a truck and decorating it. Virginia Vaillancourt stated we would have to rent the truck the morning of the parade and decorate it which would be rush, maybe we could rent a truck a few days before and get help to put everything on so it would be ready to drive on the morning of the parade. Virginia Vaillancourt was looking for ideas from the member on what we can do i.e the Health Employees Union used a big bus. One member suggested we look into companies that participate in other parades in the past to see if we can borrow /rent their float or rent a school bus and decorating it with pride colours. Michael Doerfler suggested we should have a plan of what we are going to do by June 1st as the parade is in July 7th.

Virginia Vaillancourt advised the members the area council donated \$200 toward the cost of the pride parade.

New VIHRC Bylaws:

VIHRC Technical Communications Michael Doerfler provided the members a summary of the terms of reference that we are being governed by in Victoria and they are three years old. There are so many things we do because we have grown so big that are not on the terms of reference. All that we see in the bylaws draft are not just from the terms of reference but covers what we are already doing which were not officially written down, i.e. elections, the bylaws covers who we are and what we do. Virginia Vaillancourt attended a meeting on April 4th in Vancouver which was all about practice for the committees and regional council. We also have PSAC constitution and BC Regional bylaws. What we need to do is to make sure that they do not violate our constitution and before we make a final draft.

We need to submit our draft of the bylaws to the regional council bylaw committee. They will review them to make sure they are in contravention of anything, they will vote on them there and the committee will be advised of their findings. We should be able to do this before our next AGM, so they can be passed at the AGM.

Tracy Shudo stated under section 2 of our bylaws 'Signing Authority' that a PSAC staff representative member can no longer have signing authority on any of the cheques. We need at least four members of the council to have signing authority so cheques can get signed. Another suggestion was to have a member of the regional council member as a signing authority.

What's on your Mind?:

Maddalena Maher stated she liked what was said earlier about bullying. Maybe we can refer to it as what it really is – a type of psychological assault on people in the form of harassment. Maybe our union can look at changing the language because bullying is a soft word and it does not adequately described the level of torture it has on some individuals, regardless of their age, gender, or sexual orientation. It is important somehow to find a way in our local to urge at the national level to look at changing the wording/amending it in some way or adding an additional description and working with JOSH (joint occupational health and safety) group as they consider bullying as harassment.

A member talked about an incident where a very young child recently faced their first bullying situation in kindergarten, a racial comment from an older child which made her very upset. The parent of the young child met with the principal, social worker, councillor and a lady from the multicultural society. When the parent left, the school promised to contact them to have another meeting or discuss some of the suggestions

brought up on how we can incorporate in the school system a way to teach the children what is acceptable behavior, what is not and accepting people's differences.

As the parent was not happy with the outcome of the meeting and what was said at the meeting, she met with the representative of the multicultural society and found out that person's child had also been bullied at that same school for the past four years, which resulted in them removing their child from the school. It was interesting that at the meeting the principal did not recognize that person.

Mark Miller stated as we have enough people as signing authority and Rosemary MacKenzie is not on any of the committees we should not put her on the spot to sign cheques.

Michael Doerfler referred to the mental health and being surprised of all the people in government that it was the prime minister who said bullying is a crime. At the same time when we think of it, it is true, as a joke, name calling, a push, verbally or mentally, can put people down and we need to change our attitude of how we think about our actions.

Virginia Vaillancourt referred to a story she heard about an eight year old girl who had been impacted by bullying from the age of three when someone asked her why she looked that way. By the time she was six years old she decided something had to be done and by the age of eight she had written a book called "I am not fat because I want to be". The book has received great reviews and feedback from adults and children who have suffered from bullying and China has implemented the book in the curriculum of grade 3- 6 children.

Tracy Shudo referred to a story in the news about a small aboriginal community of 400 people back east that had numerous suicides and asked the government to declare a state of emergency due to the number suicides or people attempting suicide.

Meeting – Call to Adjourn

VIHRC Acting President Michael Doerfler called to adjourn this meeting at 7:43 p.m.

Next Meeting Notification

Tuesday June 18, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
at the PSAC Office in Admirals Walk