

**VANCOUVER ISLAND
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 10, 2009**

In attendance:

GUESTS: Doug Connell, Infocus Rehabilitation Services, Lynn McCay, Literacy Victoria

ASL & SIGNED ENGLISH INTERPRETERS: MARY BUTTERFIELD & MARY WARNER

COMMITTEE: MICHAEL DOERFLER, PAUL JONES, VIRGINIA VANILLACOURT, CINDY LITTLE, WENDY BRUCE (FORMERLY DOBBIE – SHE HAS LEGALLY CHANGED BACK TO HER MAIDEN NAME), MARK MCCALOUR, MADDALENA MAHER, MANDI SCHUBERT and I believe that was all committee members there.

REGRETS: ANITA HOFFMAN & DAVE JACKSON

STAFF: JAMES LITTLE

Meeting Convened 535 PM

Guest Speaker:

Lynn McCay from Literacy Victoria and Douglas Connell from Infocus Rehabilitation Services presented to the committee a presentation on the services that Victoria Literacy Provides and the funding cuts that are affecting their operations.

Literacy Victoria is a free service that is provided to Adults.

Lynn provided the following alarming statistics:

48 percent of adults in Canada are below a basic reading level.

40% (1 million) of adults in BC do not have a proper level of literacy.

Literacy Victoria provides free services such as Tutor-Learner Partnerships. Tutors and learners are matched according to each others set of skills, personalities, etc. Lynn discussed that many people with literary deficiencies cannot even read the sign for Literacy Victoria and therefore that basic skill in being able to identify that resource for help is a barrier to those who need assistance.

Lynn went on to discuss the Outreach Program where a movie night is held. This provides a safe non-judgmental environment for people to come and network and socialize together.

Lynn went on to discuss a Pilot Group who hopefully will help in the medical field. The Program is called Health Literacy. The pilot group consists of a physician, medical assistant, a learner, a tutor and the program coordinator. The goal is to hopefully identify literacy issues, even when a patient is hiding their deficiencies.

Lynn went on to discuss that Free Camosun College Programs are offered at Literacy Victoria. These programs are preparatory programs that help the learner work towards qualifying for College Level Programs.

Lynn discussed another program called the Essential Skills and Workforce Literacy Pilot Project, It is a program where it is a literacy based employment program where learners are provided with skills and support for entry level positions with local employers involved in the project. If successful, this program could go Canada Wide due to the fact that the program is funded federally.

Lynn discussed that though these programs are well funded, substantial cuts under a separate budget that relies on provincial funding has been impacted for Core Operational costs. For the first time in 20 years of service, Literacy Victoria has had to start a waitlist for potential learners. Literacy Victoria needs more tutors to help meet the demand for tutor services. Staff have been cut to 4 days a week. and are staggering their days off, so that the doors can remain open as much as possible.

Lynn and Doug then fielded questions from the committee. Some committee members were able to contribute their own experiences with this subject.

Speaker Ended 635 PM

Break

Meeting reconvened 645 PM

Previous Minutes: Request for Correction to Date of Previous Meeting Moved: Michael
Seconded: Paul Carried : All

Terms of Reference

The committee discussed the Terms of Reference. Clarification is needed to the role of Equity Seeking Council Members on the PSACBC Regional Council. Mandi commented that we have also 2 Regional Coordinators for South Island and they represent all PSAC Members not specific to any equity seeking group.

The Committee agreed that the Terms of Reference Committee will meet with Dave to discuss TOR concerns and include Garry Fraser, Staff Resource Person to find out what the Mainland Committee is doing around this subject.

Mandi inquired about the delegate status to Convention. Cindy and James confirmed that it is PSAC Regional Convention that we have delegate status to.

Banner

The committee agreed that a new banner would be a good investment to promote the VIHRC. The committee agreed that the winning logo would be on the banner. The committee discussed possibilities in the type of banner that was needed. The committee agreed that Michael and Mark will work on costing.

Logo Contest

The committee agreed that we will move forward and announce the Logo Contest. We agreed that we will follow the same guidelines as the Area Council and Health and Safety Committee. It was agreed that Paul will email Patrick to promote this logo contest and that Rosemary will also be approached to share our logo contest with Island Members.

Pride Parade:

Paul thanked everyone for their participation in the parade and discussed that next year he would like to emphasize Victoria at Pride.

Banking

The committee agreed that an account with Community Savings was a good idea and we would approach Virginia to invite a bank representative to do the paperwork. We were very excited about our 500.00 seed money. It was agreed that we would like Rosemary to be a signer on the account. Mandi stated that there should be at least 3 signers to cover off holidays, etc

Medical and Dental Leave

Mandi briefly discussed that the new TBS policy was impacting members all over. She discussed that we are awaiting on a legal opinion from the PSAC. In the meantime, Mandi discussed that Duty to Accommodate grievances can and should be filed as grievances pave the way to changing the Collective Agreement. Even if the grievances are deemed invalid, it is still a headache for management and they will be at least forced to look at each situation on its own merits.

Mandi also provided to the committee (with thanks to the RO for their support) Duty to Accommodate information as well as a educational document produced by the PSAC. This document can be used in grievances as well.

Furniture-Duty to Accommodate

James provided documentation as a local tool that can be used to show that Ergonomic Furniture and Equipment can be transferred to your new federal workplace regardless of which department purchased it.

Next Meeting: **October 29, 2009, 500 PM**