

PSAC Mainland and Haida Gwaii Young Workers' Committee

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Thursday March 25, 2021

18:00 PST

Held virtually via Zoom

Members in Attendance: Navid Tasouji (Chair; CEIU 20949), Simba Muskwe (Vice-Chair; CEIU 20974), Susan Tsang (Treasurer; CEIU 20937), Alice Wang (Secretary; CEIU 20937), Todd Smith (Agri Culture Union 20044), and Jennifer Zanella (CEIU 20938)

Regrets: Many members reported after the General Meeting that they did not receive the registration invite.

PSAC Staff: Varinder Johal (PSAC Regional Rep – Young Workers)
Patrick Bragg (Political Communications Officer)
Jamey Mills (REVP President)

Order of Business:

- I. Call to Order
- II. Acknowledgement of Indigenous Traditional Territories
- III. Opening remarks by Jamey Mills
- IV. Swag
- V. New agenda items from members
- VI. Review of minutes from the previous meeting (February 18, 2021)
- VII. Chairperson's Report
- VIII. Treasurer's Report
- IX. 2021 Objectives
- X. Roundtable / News
- XI. Adjournment

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 18:05 by Navid.

II. Acknowledgement of Indigenous Traditional Territories

Navid acknowledged the traditional and unceded territories of the many First Nations that make up the BC Mainland and Haida Gwaii on behalf of the Committee.

III. Opening remarks by Jamey Mills

Navid invited Jamey to give the opening remarks.

Jamey asked members to introduce themselves.

Navid: joined government 2.5 years ago; got involved after the Young Workers Summit (thanked Alice); two things of importance to Navid are how teleworking is now a feature for young workers and union involvement in general for young people in general that could be bettered.

Jennifer: works with IRCC downtown; grown to enjoy Committee as its nice to connect with young workers with different regions; at the office, it can be intimidating with young workers being the minority.

Todd: works for Canadian Food Inspection Agency in Burnaby; works in the admin; alternate REVP; only have about 10 months left as a young worker; got involved because it is important to be at the tables where decisions are made at the workplace and in our community; the union does a lot of good and we need to bring people in to it.

Alice: works for Employment and Social Development Canada; cares a lot about social inequity and thought the union was a good way to get involved to preserve and strengthen Canadian democracy.

Simba: apologized for having been away due medical emergency in the family; hoped to be more involved next Monday; got involved in the Committee because of contacts with other young workers and seeing what sort of initiatives the union could offer and how he can help

Susan: is a new worker at large; wanted to know your rights from the start so one can thrive and improve personally; wants to lead change on issues that matter to us

Jamey stated he will make sure to take these notes back and consider how they are reflected in the union mandate.

Jamey introduced himself:

- Has been with the union for 16 years
- Started off getting involved at a picket line which grew into regional council
- Previously Young Workers Committee was capped at 30 years old, now its 35
- Worked on issues around precarious work and workers rights, campaign 27
 - This is the reason why you prepay for your gas today
- The union advocates for better wages for everyone, not just unionized people

Jamey stated that he has two items he wanted to share with the Committee:

- 1.) The importance of mobilizing around collective bargaining for next round
 - a. Besides Todd, everyone else's collective agreement is with Treasury Board
 - b. It will be a tough round of bargaining as we are in the workplace so infrequently to discuss what is happening at the table
 - c. Telework is uncharted territory.
- 2.) Phoenix and Phoenix damages
 - a. While we have made gains to hire back compensation advisors, there are still thousands and thousands cases building up every month.
 - b. Jamey has spoken with half of the MPs in the province, we are still cautiously optimistic that the CRA ruling will be in our favour with respect to Phoenix
 - c. Rest assured we will fight this if the ruling is not in our favour

Simba asked whether a new system would replace Phoenix to which Jamey stated that we are a few years away from switching completely but work is in progress to move away from Phoenix

IV. Swag

Navid turned the floor to Alice to lead the discussion on swag.

Alice began by asking what swag items Varinder had been able to procure for the Committee's use for potential mail-out to members.

Varinder showed onscreen lens cleaners and magnets.

Varinder also stated he had several Frisbee, water bottles, T-shirts, and that he can talk about strategies offline.

Jamey stated that the only group in the union that will decrease in size unless we build capacity around it is the Young Worker Committee (YWC).

Jamey stated that while it is really important to recognize Young Workers (YWs) who are already participating, recognizing YWs who have newly identifying may be even more pivotal.

Jamey stated creating a letter that goes out to newly self-identified YWs to accompany mail-out swag may be something to consider.

Jamey emphasized that his inputs are ideas for consideration, and not "asks."

Jamey stated that he also had a couple of hoodies that can be given away as prizes.

Jamey informed the Committee that swag costs may be modest per item (e.g. \$3/water bottle) but the graphic set up can be high (e.g. \$250).

Hence, Jamey suggested pivoting away from MHGYWC-specific swags and use PSAC BC regional swags instead.

Jamey further endorsed the idea of adding a letter to the swag being mailed out.

Patrick stated that the Committee may also want to consider designing a short and snappy survey to send out to YWs and offered to help design the survey to find out how people could feel more connected to the union.

Patrick stated that swags can also be coupled with the survey, such as doing a draw at the end and giving out a prize.

Patrick stated this idea was taken from the Vancouver Area Council whose recent survey success yielded interesting information.

Alice ask how union members “self-identify” as a YW to which Patrick provided the link where union members can self-identify as a YW in the chat: <https://psacbc.com/psac-confidential-self-identification-form/>

Jamey stated that currently, the only way for people to self-identify as a YW is through self-ID form. On May 10, we will have a Young Worker Coordinator to engage locals, branches, area councils, and work sites to talk about all the committees we have.

Jamey stated that previously, the union would also table at public events.

Jamey stated that survey results can be pushed up to inform upper level of what issues are being experienced, such as concerns for child-care or housing or term precarity.

Todd stated that he has also had successes phoning local executives to ask if they would be willing to forward an email to their local members, sharing the links for YWs in their local to self-identify as a YW with the union.

Todd stated that he found people appreciate those phone calls and they were able to develop a list of locals and phone numbers.

Jamey stated that the region has locals with 1500+ members in them and that if at least 5-13% are YWs, your mailing cost will be born. Splitting that between postage and loss of salary could be significant.

Jamey stated that he can provide the Committee with some info about local presidents

Simba added whether there are any restrictions for calling YWs through local presidents to which Jamey stated we need to make sure phone number is only used for this intent to protect privacy.

Patrick also suggested the idea of mass texting to YWs.

Susan stated that the letter mailed to YWs should be in tandem with an electronic version emailed to them, and that emailing may be easier in some ways to texting or calling.

Alice stated that she had never filled out the YW self-identification form and asked whether the employer had a responsibility to inform the union when onboarding new employees to which Patrick stated that it was not the job of the employer to send you the form.

Alice asked how many people on the database created through the self-identified form to which Patrick stated he did not have this information right now.

Patrick stated that normally, a Rep would go around the workplace to collect this information and stated that Varinder might know.

Patrick estimated that there was probably couple of hundreds of email addresses on the list though some have definitely aged out.

Alice stated that the purpose of doing outreach through swag is two-fold: to recruit new members; and to deepen engagement with existing members. Though some have aged out in the current list, others haven't. If we send out an email to people already on the list asking for any YW out there to fill out a survey and get a swag, word-of-mouth about getting involved with the union can spread from there.

Patrick stated that in that case, the Committee may want to consider sending that survey to an even larger database PSAC BC has that contains 18,000 members. Many of them are YWs who haven't self-identified.

Patrick advised starting with the big list, sending a message out to everybody, perhaps with a message like, "If you are a young worker, read this. If you are not, send it to someone who is" so that the Committee casts a wide net

Navid asked with whom the Committee should coordinate doing that to which Jamey replied Varinder.

Alice asked whether we should send out the link to sign the union card as well to the 18,000 recipients to which Patrick recommended keeping this email focused to YW-identification, cautioning that some of the recipients may not be PSAC members anymore.

Alice asked whether the 18,000 include YWs from both MHG and Vancouver Island (VI) to which Patrick stated yes and recommended the Committee to talk to our comrades in VI.

Patrick stated that once they have YWs mailing addresses, they can divvy them up by postal code.

Alice asked whether student works can join YW Committees to which Jamey stated they can join as guests. Jamey explained that the Committee is only open to PSAC members of certain aspects and that student workers wouldn't be able to hold office or vote.

Alice asked whether the union can participate in the National Public Service Week in June 2021 to which Jamey stated the employer don't normally recognized the union in that event and that when the union has even boycotted the event when certain groups have been without a collective agreement for five years.

V. New agenda items from members

Navid opened the floor to whether members had agenda items to add, stating that his focus on telework and outreach.

Jennifer offered to help with social media outreach.

Todd stated that as the YW delegate to the Vancouver Area Council, Alice can help the Committee partner up for events.

Alice stated that the Committee has just launched its Twitter page and shared the link in the chat.

Alice invited Jennifer to get involved, stating that she had planned some ideas for future tweets such as an anti-Asian racism statement and our Committee mandate.

Jennifer stated that she was happy to see the account go live.

Alice stated that in their outgoing communications, we should also advertise that members can follow us on @PSAC_BC_MHG.

VI. Review of minutes from the previous annual general meeting (February 18, 2021)

Todd stated that there was a small typo: “After discussion, it was agreed to increase the “swag” line to \$600 as that may help with enagement.s”

Motion to accept the amended minutes moved by Navid

Seconded by Todd

Carried unanimously

VII. Chairperson’s Report

Navid stated that he would now pull up the Chair’s report.

While the Committee waited, Alice invited Susan to share some of the intents behind the image chosen for the Committee’s Twitter account.

Susan explained that Alice had shown the executive committee many images and we chose this one because the bicycle was indexical of movement, propelling us forward, and a modality to spread the message.

Alice stated that the books and the emptiness on the bookcase were indexical of humility and making space for our blind spots.

Navid added that the bicycle also bespoke environmentalism.

Upon pulling up the Chair’s report, Navid shared the following remarks:

“This is the first meeting since our AGM, and the first sitting of our new executive. At this point in time, our goal is to define ourselves as a committee and determine what our goals and objectives are for this year. We will be soliciting ideas from members at large during this phase.

The executive has already identified two areas to focus on:

- a) Determining and advocating for the things that young workers want from future teleworking regimes/protocols
- b) Increasing union presence among young workers, and increasing participation
- c) Precarious employment in public service – seeking fairness from employer
- d) Social media expansion – the creation of our Twitter handle @PSAC_BC_MHG

We intend to put forward a plan of action for these items by our next general meeting, set for May 20, 2021.”

Navid stated that he intended to put together an action plan and reach out to the YW Coordinator on May 11.

Simba proposed adding precarious employment as an item of focus, stating that it was something commonly brought up at the Summit and that for YWs, some of the contracts are not as fair as they used to be due to the inclusion of the subset clause.

Navid concurred.

Alice asked Simba to elaborate on how the contracts have become more precarious.

Simba explained that at Immigration and Refugee Board where he had been working, new hires, who are predominantly YWs, have a “subset clause” in their contracts which means the time they spend working on that contract won’t count towards the three years you need to become indeterminate.

Varinder stated that this is definitely an issue to be raised in your local, moving up to the component, and to the regional and national levels if that is something that has been going on.

Navid asked whether there was anything else to add to the report to which Susan stated the Committee's new Twitter page to which Navid concurred.

Motion to accept the report moved by Navid

Seconded by Todd

Carried unanimously

VIII. Treasurer's Report

There has been no changes to the financial but Susan looked forward to get the swag and donation accounts moving once we start using our budget.

Motion to accept the report moved by Susan

Seconded by Simba

Carried unanimously

IX. 2021 Objectives

Navid elaborated on two items

1.) Outreach

- a. The Executive will have a plan for outreach for the May 20th meeting
- b. The Executive will also have a design for the survey and a plan for writing the letter
- c. We will also be phoning regional executives

2.) Telework

- a. Navid tabled this discussion for General Meeting with more members

Navid acknowledged the focus on precarious work identified by Simba and the social media presence of the Committee going forward.

Susan stated that the letter should also match our Twitter communication to which Navid concurred.

Simba asked for more information about social media pages and with whom we can engage to which Navid explained that YWs Twitter page have historically had low followings.

Alice added that when the Executives decided to create a Twitter page, they did so with the objective of putting a one-stop shop of themselves out there, not to count on it to build a building per se. As such, there has not been too much concern over content-creation. As a creative project for the members alone, it has been a good exercise.

Simba asked what about if we create pages for Instagram and Facebook to which Varinder stated Patrick has many counterparts across Canada and that all content creation need to be approved by PSAC.

Simba asked if there are restrictions on who can follow our page on Facebook if we create one to which Varinder stated that he has seen private groups with page moderators.

Todd echoed the choice of private groups for Facebook due to user demographic on that platform to which Varinder added that was exactly why people took a more walled-off approach.

Todd stated that there are also anti-union groups on Facebook but compared it to tabling at a booth for public events, anyone can come talk to us.

Navid asked about the procedures to change quorum requirements to which Varinder stated that he will clarify on the logistics for how to do this at the AGM and encouraged the Committee to come up with an alternative quorum requirement in the meantime.

Navid asked Alice to let it be recorded that: "We intend on having a discussion on that at our next general meeting pending more information from Varinder."

Varinder stated that in order to ask members to vote for any changes to your Term of Reference, including quorum, the Committee needs to provide a draft Term of Reference 30 days in advance.

Navid thanked Simba for arranging the social event, stating it was really fun.

Navid stated that the next Committee general meeting is May 20th.

X. Round Table / News

Navid opened the floor for round table.

Todd: announced that the next Vancouver Area Council meeting is April 7; Alice will be representing the Committee but everyone can join; thanked Navid for being an excellent Chair.

Simba: thanked Navid and all the new Executives; thanked to Jennifer for attending; thanked everyone else went to the virtual social event, the BC Fed Young Workers really appreciated it.

Varinder: stated it was great to see familiar faces Jennifer, Todd, and Simba; there are still education opportunities with the union with some union basic courses being offered potentially in May or June 2021; loved hearing about the symbolism in the PSAC YWC banner and looked forward to sharing it with his colleagues.

Susan: stated will work hard to recruit more members for the next general meeting, reaching out to more folks on WhatsApp.

Alice: stated she will recruit more members for the next general meeting as well; and offered to send Varinder an article about the sociopolitical significance of bicycles in modern history that had shaped her choice for the Twitter banner to which Varinder accepted.

XI. Adjournment

There being no new business, Navid called the meeting adjourned at 8:15pm PST.