

DRAFT

BRUSH Meeting April 13, 2021 via Teams

In Attendance:

Linda Harding – Chair (GSU), Monique Bakker (UHEW), Kim Tenhunen (UHEW), Jennifer Horsley – Secretary (UPCE), , Tracy Arrowsmith (UTE), Leanne Hughes (CIU), Lea Serron (UTE), Karen Sutton (CIU), Allen ?, Jacquie Monk, Heather Vaughn(CEIU), Bert Farwell(UCTE), Kim Tenhunen (UHEW), Celine Ahodekon (UNE), Ernest Hooker (UCTE), Christine Austin (AGRU), Victoria Manuel (UNDE), Sharon Barbour (Staff)

Regrets: Kirsty Havard (USJE)

Meeting called to order at: 5:32 PM

AGENDA

1. Roll call
2. Territorial Acknowledgement
3. Moment of Silence for Workers Killed and Injured on the Job
4. Accepting the Agenda
5. Review Previous Minutes (November 19, 2020)
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Business Arising
8. New Business
 - BC Fed Activities
 - Day of Mourning
9. Round Table
10. Next Meeting
11. Adjournment

Territorial Acknowledgement:

Linda opened the meeting by recognized that this meeting was taking place on many unceded indigenous territories of British Columbia and that she personally was coming to the meeting from the territories of the *Squamish, Musqueam and Tsliel Waututh* peoples. Karen recognized that she was taking the meeting as a guest on the territories of the *Ktunaxa (Kootenays), Syilix (Okanagan) and Secwepemc (Shuswap) Nations*. Linda explained that she and the rest of the Regional Council had recently had the opportunity to learn about Land Recognition during a Decolonizing Practices workshop.

Linda asked the participants to take a moment to reflect on the territories on which they were taking the call.

Moment of Silence for Workers Killed and Injured on the Job:

Linda spoke about 39 year old PSAC Member Michael Paul Chinna, was fatally injured in a workplace accident last month. He was an apprentice power systems electrician who'd been with the NWT power corporation since 2018. The committee held a moment of silence for workers killed and injured on the job.

Accepting the Agenda (M/S/C) Karen Sutton/Tracy Arrowsmith

Linda asked if there were any additions to the agenda. Monique asked if we would be talking about COVID, Linda responded that she should bring that up in Round Table.

Review Previous Minutes (Feb 11, 2020 AGM) (M/S/C) Tracy/Karen

Treasurer's Report:

(M/S/C) Tracy/?

Tracy and Linda reported that they haven't had a chance to finish setting up mobile/online banking but were planning on having a virtual meeting the following week to complete the set up. Tracy reported that there have been no new expenditures and the Regional Disbursement had not yet been received for this year.

Business Arising:

BC Regional Health & Safety Conference

Linda gave a report about the recently held virtual BC Regional Health & Safety Conference which she felt was successful with good participation in workshops and plenary. Linda opened the floor for anyone who attended to give their thoughts on the conference.

Heather said that even though she has been a longtime Health & Safety activist she still took away new information.

Karen said that she really enjoyed seeing so many new faces, new activists. She mentioned that members in attendance were asking questions, being engaged by the presentations. She passed on a critique that there was a lot of use of abbreviations and that they weren't necessarily universally used abbreviations, so the information doesn't necessarily follow through to everyone.

Linda mentioned that 75% of the attendees were new faces to Linda.

Tracy said that she felt it was a very good conference and the second regional convention she had attended, first time she had been on the organizing committee. She said she didn't leave disappointed. She found the ergonomic presentation quite interesting. She is glad to see that the conference generated new participation in BRUSH.

Christine said that she felt that the conference was well organized and moderated, especially for being held virtually. Some of the presentations were familiar material, but it was good to see it from another perspective. She said she would follow up with Karen about mental health first aid reporting.

Linda noted that usually participants would be able to select their workshop but for expediency they offered fewer workshops and broke participants into groups to take them in smaller groupings.

Leanne

New Business:

BC Fed Activities

Linda noted that she had attended the BCFed Health & Safety meeting but had needed to leave about a ½ hour early to attend another meeting. Most of the discussion was around the Day of Mourning.

Day of Mourning

The Day of Mourning will be held virtually again this year. According to the WCB statistics of claims there were 151 workers killed on the job in 2020. The Labour Movement believes the numbers are actually higher. Heather asked if those numbers include COVID deaths. Sharon responded that yes, the number includes all occupational injuries and disease which caused death.

The BC Fed event can be found at <http://DayofMourning.bc.ca>

Linda also noted that geographic restrictions do not apply this year, so if you can't attend BC events look online for events taking place across the country.

Because no one is in the PSAC BC Regional office, posters won't be mailed out to locals this year but posters and decals can be downloaded from the BC Fed or Day of Mourning websites.

Linda thanked Heather for finding the website information.

Round Table:

Jacque said that this was her second attendance at BRUSH. She is a CBSA officer and said that it is a constant struggle with her employer to get proper COVID protocols. There is a lot of fear. She also mentioned that they have been fighting to be recognized as frontline workers for vaccination.

Lea had nothing for round table.

Celine had nothing at the time for round table.

Allen had nothing to add to round table at the time.

Christine mentioned that ESDC was doing virtual inspections of workplaces, they had recently had one at one of the research centres and they had received notice that one would be upcoming in her workplace soon. Some of the information that was requested was a document review for COVID safety protocols and OSH Committee meeting minutes.

Karen responded that the Osoyoos Port had had a virtual inspection with regards to COVID protocols and suggested that Christine should get in touch with Robert Strang (PSAC Staff) as he has information on it.

Heather did not have any topics to discuss.

Tracy noted that UTE members at CRA in Prince George were back in the workplace since July. She had chosen to return because the employer would not supply her with a sit/stand desk at home. Both her husband and daughter work in health care and she was provided with the proper desk because of this and has returned to working from home. There were 5 – 11 people in the worksite the previous week. There had been a potential COVID exposure that they were notified of minutes before their OHS meeting. They were told by the employer that the OHS Committee did not need to be notified unless there was a positive case. She mentioned that a deep clean had been completed.

Lea asked if the employer would have an obligation to notify about the deep clean and chemicals used in case anyone had environmental sensitivities and may have a reaction to the cleaning products? She suggested this might be a way to bolster the argument that employees have the right to know about possible COVID exposures.

Linda suggested that Tracy speak to her National Officer (UTE), Kim Koch for next steps and Lea also suggested speaking to Heather Kenney(UTE) to brainstorm.

Monique mentioned that extra cleanings are supposed to take place in the evening and that notice is supposed to be given 24 hours advance notice, those who might be exposed to chemicals should be notified.

Allen noted that in his workplace they are using outside cleaning crews and there has been an obligation to provide MSDS sheets for all products used.

Kim suggested requesting that a near miss report for potential exposures or filing a Hazardous Incident Report because of an infectious exposure. Lea mentioned that she was under the impression that there were extra hurdles in place in regards to refusing unsafe work, but Linda responded that the person who told her that was mistaken, the right to refuse unsafe work is enshrined in the Canada Labour Code. Sharon said that there are minimal exceptions to this, eg. working at sea, she would be happy to discuss this offline with Lea.

Karen told us that the (CBSA) officers at the Osoyoos share a locker room with the American officers. There are issues with not switching teams much and the officers don't really want to share space. There is no control over cleaners/cleaning because the locker room is actually on the other side of the border.

Leanne said that she enjoyed the conference and mentioned that the ergonomics "keynote" speaker was good. She said that her employer had wanted to start up face to face hands on training last week. Provincial Health didn't confirm. Her employer is not tracking Covid cases unless transmission is at work. Leanne echoed others comments around training and the right to refuse unsafe work with regard to Lea's item.

Bert did not have anything for round table.

Shane said that the information given at the Conference around the new regulation around mandatory online training around Violence and Workplace Harassment in the Canada Labour Code was interesting. His employers buildings are still vacant. They are operating on a national level to repopulate the offices, probably won't be until 2022. There is only about 10-25% occupation. Shane said that the conference was well run, he especially liked the virtual fatigue session and shared the information with his local.

Linda interjected that she didn't see her group going back into the office anytime soon.

Ernest asked if any of the employers or the union were tracking what's going on in home offices since so many are working from home. He felt that workers were less likely to report a claim and employers are less likely to action claims.

Linda said that her department is not unless there is an incident.

Monique said she could share a draft version of an article done by her health & safety committee at work. She noted that she still does not have an ergonomic station at home. There are no spending approvals in her department. Someone responded that Treasury Board members should be approved to spend up to \$500.00 to spend on home equipment.

Monique asked about a list of exposure sites, as well as home office issues. She was wondering if you have to inform management if you receive a vaccine. Linda responded that it is personal medical information so you would not be required to disclose that information.

Allen responded that his advice is don't ask, don't tell because he feels that the employer will use the information to force people back into worksites.

Sharon mentioned 698 Leave for vaccination and also that there is an article on the PSAC Website about "Your Rights at Work and COVID 19 Screening"

Karen asked if it addressed those who are medically unable to receive the vaccine.

Jennifer shared that she is having some issues around a DTA accommodate for a member with a back injury. Several people made suggestions about getting more information – BC Fed Duty to Accommodate course, ask for an ergonomic assessment for the member. Karen suggested seeking a Functional Capacity Assessment for her, ask also what her letter of offer says. Shane mentioned that there is also a right to Dignity of Work

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, July 7th, 2021

Thursday, October 14, 2021

Before we adjourned Karen thanked Linda for her leadership for the past 3 years and wished her luck at the upcoming Convention elections.

Adjourn: 7:02 PM (M/S/C) Tracy/Christine.