

## **Okanagan Area Council meeting February 17, 2026, via Zoom**

Attended: Jeanne Olineck, Chair (CEIU 20914), Ajay Anwal VP (UTE 20026), Brigitte Willman (USJE 20069), Kelly Megyesi (CEIU 20972), Ashley-Rae Snape (UTE 20026), Nadia Sokal (AGR 20043), Jasmine Ladouceur (CEIU 20914), Alex Vital Stuit - PSAC BC Regional

Welcome & Land Acknowledgement - Jeanne Olineck.

Jeanne invited the attendees to introduce themselves.

### Agenda

- Approved as submitted m/Nadia, s/Ashley-Rae. All in favour – passed.

Treasurer report - Kelly Megyesi

- No activity since AGM. Financials approved. Current balance of \$2598.65.
  - Discussion on auditor compensation. Kelly will research and discuss with other committees. This will be brought forward at the next committee meeting for a possible motion.

Resolutions to Regional Conference – Nadia Sokal

### **V3.0 Resolution: Supporting members with addictions.**

**Originating Body: PSAC BC Regional Council Education Committee**

**Language of Origin: English**

Whereas union members may experience addiction-related illness and challenges and may request support from union representatives.

Whereas many union representatives currently have little or no formal training in addiction awareness or response;

Whereas training delivered by qualified external experts is best suited to address addiction-related education and support;

Be it resolved that the PSAC develop and maintain a comprehensive resource guide, including funding mechanisms, guiding principles, and educational materials to support union representatives in responding appropriately when members disclose addiction-related issues.

Be it further resolved that the PSAC fund qualified external training programs to provide union representatives with practical education on engaging with, supporting, and referring members experiencing addiction-related illness and challenges.

Rationale

Union representatives are often the first point of contact when members experience personal or workplace challenges, including addiction-related issues. Without proper training or resources, representatives may feel unprepared to respond effectively, which can unintentionally limit the support

provided to members during critical moments. Addiction is a complex health and social issue that requires informed, compassionate, and trauma-aware responses.

By developing a comprehensive resource guide and funding external expert-led training, PSAC can ensure representatives are equipped with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to support members appropriately while respecting boundaries and confidentiality. External training provides evidence-based approaches and professional expertise that internal resources alone may not offer. This resolution strengthens member support, promotes safer interactions, reduces stigma, and reinforces PSAC's commitment to member wellbeing, inclusion, and effective representation across all regions and components.

Motion to submit this to BC convention on behalf of this area council made by Nadia, s/Ashley-Rae. All in favour - passed.

## **#2 UPDATED LANGUAGE IN EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT AND REGULATION FOR MATERNITY BENEFITS**

### **UPDATED LANGUAGE IN EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT AND REGULATION FOR MATERNITY BENEFITS**

The Committee recommends concurrence in Resolution 14 which reads as follows:

WHEREAS the maternity terminology of "confinement" related to Maternity benefits as referenced in The Employment Insurance Act (EIA) and The Employment Insurance Regulations (EIR) is outdated, using phrases such as "her confinement is expected" and "her confinement occurs"; and

WHEREAS the term confinement is rooted in historical practices implying that childbirth involves a period of isolation or "lying in," which does not reflect modern understandings or practices around birth; and

WHEREAS members and the public have expressed that the term confinement is not only outdated but is also considered offensive or triggering:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT PSAC lobby the federal government and appropriate departments and agencies, to revise the language used in Employment Insurance Maternity Benefits legislation, replacing the term confinement with more accurate and respectful terminology such as "delivery".

Rationale:

Language must be continuously reviewed and updated to ensure it remains inclusive and not harmful to members. PSAC should advocate updating the wording in the Employment Insurance Act regarding maternity benefits. While the French version accurately uses the word, "accouchement", the English version requires revisions to ensure that both languages reflect inclusive and equitable language.

Motion to submit this to BC convention on behalf of this area council made by Nadia, s/Kelly. All in favour - passed. (Kelly provided this great video on the unions past involvement for maternity. [A Struggle to Remember: Fighting for Our Families](#))

## **3. ELIMINATION OF UNION-FUNDED ALCOHOL**

The Committee recommends **concurrence** in Resolution **34** which reads as follows:

**WHEREAS** a decline in membership and dues because of employer-led position reductions. It is incumbent upon the union to demonstrate fiscal responsibility and actions to ensure the safety of our members and that our actions align with our mission. The subsidization of alcohol at union events, including open bars, drink tickets, or hospitality suites, constitutes a non-essential expense with health and safety repercussions; and

**WHEREAS** alcohol use is associated with significant health and social harms, including its role in domestic violence where in Canada 78% of domestic violence cases are towards women and girls; and

**WHEREAS** studies continuously show correlations between alcohol consumption and domestic violence:

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** union funds shall not be used to purchase or subsidize alcohol at any union-sponsored events.

**Rationale:**

Consuming alcohol is a personal choice; union dues should not be used to purchase or subsidize alcohol. Alcohol use is associated with significant health and social harms, including domestic violence, where in Canada 78% of domestic violence cases are towards women and girls and workplace violence and harassment.

Motion to submit this to BC convention on behalf of this area council made by Nadia, s/Brigitte. Jeanne opposed it on record. All the rest in favour - passed.

#### **4. UNDERSTANDING PSAC ROLE IN COLONIAL OPPRESSION**

The Committee recommends **concurrence** in Resolution **65** which reads as follows:

**WHEREAS** The legacy of colonization has affected the daily lives of millions of Canadians across many generations; and

**WHEREAS** the last residential school in Canada closed in 1996; and

**WHEREAS** PSAC has been representing public service workers since 1966:

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** PSAC undertakes an in-depth investigation to understand the true role PSAC members may have had in the residential school system, the sixties scoops, and other acts of colonial oppression of Indigenous people, and publish a report on these findings.

**Rationale:**

PSAC must continue to meaningfully engage in the process of Truth and Reconciliation. This includes actions that lead to healing, understanding and reparations. As difficult, challenging, and painful as our past may be, as a trade union that may have represented positions involved in this dark chapter of Canadian history, PSAC must act with purpose, honesty, and diligence.

Motion to submit this to BC convention on behalf of this area council made by Nadia, s/Ashley-Rae. Two abstained from vote, all the rest in favour - passed.

Jeanne had to leave meeting at this point. Ajay took over as meeting chair.

Education - Kelly Megyesi

- Regional meetings brought forward discussions about tying education into other events to maximize on council funds, participation, and opportunities to get together.
- Reminders to members to take courses and what courses might be of interest to members.
- Education opportunities need to be attractive and meaningful to members giving up their time.

Events

- Committee members to come up with ideas for this year's events and activities.
- Donation basket for PSAC Regional Convention. Ideas provided through round table.
  - o Kelly made a motion for up to \$200 be spent for a convention basket on behalf of the Okanagan Area Council. m/Kelly s/Jasmine. All in favour – passed.

#### Roundtable

Ajay - Tumbler Ridge events noted and recognized by this committee with well wishes offered.

Brigitte – Tumbler Ridge PSAC members are greatly affected and may need support.

Nadia – Suggested we send a card of well wishes to the PSAC members in area.

Alex – Mentioned he was at the NE Area Council AGM this week and suggested we reach out to Tracy Arrowstone to see what we can do/send to assist and share our thoughts. Ajay to follow up with Tracy.

Ashley-Rae – Offered to also assist on behalf of Area Women's committee if financial assist is needed.

Nadia – Will send resolutions by the deadline of February 20<sup>th</sup>.

- - CFIA and Agriculture Canada had WFA announcements with mostly admin. staff generally affected. Across Canada, Agriculture has 1043 positions affected with 689 eliminated. CFIA is about the same. There are only 5000-6000 employees for each of these agencies. Be wary about news articles with regards to how this is affecting our members and what this is affecting. Where is money going? Is it going to Canadians for food rebates or big business, etc. Lots of stress and MH affected while waiting for outcome, survivors guilt, etc.

Alex – PSAC events and education for all components are available through the PSAC website.

- WFA adjustment modules are available for PSAC members.
- Resolutions to the 2026 PSAC B.C. Regional Convention must be forwarded to the Office of the Regional Executive Vice-President by **Friday, February 20, 2026, at 4 PM Pacific**. Please submit resolutions in electronic format via email to [HarrinT@psac-afpc.com](mailto:HarrinT@psac-afpc.com)
- New representative from PSAC(Brianne) will be taking over for Varinder for two months' while he is on leave. Details will be forthcoming.

Next meeting April 21,2026 at 7 pm. Location TBA

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn m/Ajay s/Brigitte > All in favour