



Vancouver Island Human Rights Committee

February 23, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Minutes prepared by
VIHRC Recording Secretary Kay Ahmadi

Released Unofficially: April 9, 2012
Adopted Officially: April 12, 2012

Attendance

Boardroom: Daniel Girard, Eric Bouffard, Kay Ahmadi, Michael Doerfler, Paul Jones, Robert Mitchell & PSAC Rep: N/A.

Teleconference: Jacqueline Cordova.

Translators: Mary Butterfield & Mary Warner.

Regrets: Cindy Little & Virginia Vaillancourt.

Meeting – Call to Order

VIHRC Vice President Robert Mitchell called this meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Robert Mitchell welcomed everyone and apologized due to prior commitments we were not able to have our scheduled meeting on February 7, 2012.

Roundtable Introduction

The members in the attendance did their own introduction to each other as part of the opening roundtable conversations.

Old Business for Review

Adoption of the November 22, 2011 VIHRC Minutes:

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

Motion: Paul Jones made the motion to accept the previous minutes.

Seconded: Kay Ahmadi.

Carried: Unanimously.

New Business

VIHRC Treasurer's Report:

VIHRC Treasurer Daniel Girard provided a financial summary of the committee's chequing and equity accounts.

Paul Jones inquired when does VIHRC usually gets their annual funding. Michael Doerfler advised that the funding has been around the same time over the last two years which is usually in April or May.

Motion: Michael Doerfler made the motion to accept the financial statements.

Seconded: Paul Jones.

Carried: Unanimously.

VIHRC Meeting Agenda Amendments:

1. Robert Mitchell mentioned that he had received a request by Sonia Manak to do a presentation on the Canadian Labour Congress Winter School which she recently attended, but unfortunately she was unable to attend tonight's meeting. We look forward to hear from her at our next meeting.

2. Paul Jones was going to talk about the Triennial Convention but tabled to the next meeting.
3. Michael Doerfler will talk about three HRCs joint meeting.

VIHRC Human Rights, Goals and Objectives:

Robert Mitchell said this meeting will give us an opportunity to look at where the committee is going and discuss what we are about. Robert Mitchell said Michael Doerfler has done such a great job over the last two years keeping us updated on different issues on his web page and everyone has contributed to create a solid info-structure of what the committee is and how it operates.

Now we need to take a step back and refocus on what the committee is about - "Human Rights". At each meeting we need to spend some time to focus on and provide information, updates, select projects or funding. What are our goals and objectives are as a human rights based committee as we move forward and what we would like to see the committee accomplish.

Some points that were discussed:

- ✧ The PSAC website has a lot of information we can use – i.e. National campaign on the PSAC website: "Mental Health Matters", "Justice for Aboriginal People". The PSAC did a presentation to the Senate committee on February 13, 2012, on their concerns about the upcoming cuts and how it is going to affect employment equity. We need to know what the union is doing and support them.
- ✧ Michael Doerfler does a lot of work on his Facebook page and it would be a good idea at our meeting to recap what has happened, what people have said, etc and promote the Facebook page.
- ✧ It was suggested maybe we can make a poster to direct people to the Facebook page and try to get a page on the National PSAC and BC PSAC websites to post updates of what the committee has been up to. At the present the website refers to the Vancouver committee – nothing about us.
- ✧ Michael Doerfler asked Eric Bouffard if he was interested in setting up a page on the PSAC website for us.
- ✧ Paul Jones mentioned he has a lot of information on the human right issues on

his web page which he will forward to Robert Mitchell or Michael Doerfler to post on the Facebook page. If we get an email about a human rights issue, we can distribute it to other people, that way we are supporting that organization and may be someone reading it can help them with funding.

- ✧ Paul Jones mentioned we recently looked at the Human Rights museum, but maybe we can look at a community outreach program that we can support. Michael Doerfler suggested we look at a local organization we can support, that way people will get an idea what is happening in their area.
- ✧ Robert Mitchell mentioned in the past we have provided funding to the Vancouver Island Regional Woman's Committee, the Pride parade and we recently had a request from Sonia Manak to help with the cost of her attending the Canadian Labour Congress Winter School. Robert Mitchell felt we should still support the Human Rights Museum as it is such a amazing national project.

Daniel Girard suggested a few ways we could raise funds or hold events. It was suggested before we plan anything, we need to check and find out what PSAC policy is in regards to sponsorship and fund raising.

VIHRC Swag Items

Daniel Girard asked where we stand on the swag items. Robert Mitchell advised the members that we need a projector to go on the website and as a committee decide what we are going to purchase. One was not available for this meeting but for our next meeting he will arrange to have one.

Jacqueline Cordova asked what does Swag stand for and Paul Jones said it was "Something We All Get".

Michael Doerfler advised the committee that we have been discussing the swag issue for the last two years, therefore at the next meeting we must vote on the products we want and place the order.

Meeting 'Wrap-Up' Discussions

Jacqueline Cordova asked Michael Doerfler when do we get our funding and does it increase as the committee gets larger. Michael Doerfler explained that we get our funding based on a financial year and the terms of office for the committee members

starts in September. Michael Doerfler will contact Bob Jackson REVP of PSAC, to see how human rights funding is allocated and find out how they calculate the funding we receive. As the prices have gone up, maybe we should be getting a little more this year.

Eric Bouffard stated he would prefer the Swag items were something he could use like t-shirts or hats, good quality so people would wear them. On the human right issue, we need to work with other committees – for example the youth committee on the mainland has visible minority members and they do not know there are other committees out there. They could be our future committee members.

The subject of mental health came up and Eric Bouffard mentioned there is an organization called “Stand Up for Mental Health” and they did a comedy performance which was great and all the actors had a mental disorder of some kind. It provided the people attending the performance a better understanding what mental health was.

Michael Doerfler said he liked what Eric Bouffard was talking about. Mental health is not one of the well known areas – 1 in 5 people could be suffering some type of mental health problem and it affects everyone, some may not even know they have an issue. Jacqueline Cordova mentioned following up what Michael Doerfler said, and that it was surprising the national suicide prevention bill passed the second reading. (The Conservatives realized that this is a problem and are looking into it.)

Michael Doerfler mentioned if a member takes a course on Human Rights, we could try to make a small contribution to their cost (\$15 – for travel), which shows we support them.

Eric Bouffard mentioned that he has had a request by his members that Michael Doerfler do a presentation at his place of employment. Robert Mitchell said Michael Doerfler came to our local AGM last year, it was very compelling, well done and memorable and that Michael Doerfler is a very good speaker. Michael Doerfler said he does not mind going it but we should not leave it just to him, anyone can do it. Michael Doerfler did admittedly agree that if he does the presentation himself that it would be a little more powerful due to his visual challenges.

Eric Bouffard asked the members if they knew a PSAC Youth committee existed or that there was a Vancouver Island Youth committee. Eric Bouffard advised the members that the Vancouver Island Youth committee was holding their first meeting in the PSAC local office on February 28, 2012 at 5.45 p.m and he would be chairing it. Eric Bouffard mentioned it was open to everyone, no matter of our age, and it would be great if some of our members attended the meeting and put the poster for the meeting up on

their union boards.

Michael Doerfler stated last fall that he was speaking with Tracy Shudo of the Mainland BC Human Rights Committee and Kelly Megyesi of the Okanagan Human Rights Committee about how each of the committees are very different and maybe that we would have a meeting where the other two committees would join us via teleconference and we can exchange ideas, find out what they are doing, share ideas, etc.

Michael Doerfler also stated that he shares some of the things we have done with the Greater Moncton Human Rights Committee (New Brunswick) and it helps them a lot.

Meeting – Call to Adjourn

VIHRC Vice President Robert Mitchell called to adjourn this meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Next Meeting Notification

Thursday April 12, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
at the PSAC Office in Admirals Walk