

**DRAFT RECORD OF MEETING
B.C. REGIONAL COUNCIL CONFERENCE CALL
HELD TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2012 AT 5:30 P.M.**

In Attendance:

Sargy Chima, Racially Visible	Kelly Megyesi, Women's Coordinator
Heather DuDoward, Aboriginal	Jamey Mills, Metro Vancouver
Benilde Gomes, Northwestern BC (Late Arrival)	Antony Paller, East Fraser Valley
Shawna Hall, Metro Vancouver	Tracy Shudo, Members with Disabilities
Patt Holmes, Northeastern BC (Late Arrival)	Virginia Vaillancourt, South Vancouver Island
Nic Humphreys, National Officers	Christine Walker, North Vancouver Island
Jayne Johns, A/REVP	Sam Wiese, Health & Safety
Martha Johnson, Southern Interior (Late Arrival)	Susan Yaciw, Southern Interior

Regrets:

Paul Croes, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender	Terri Lee, Metro Vancouver
Daphne Ho, A/Young Workers	Cindy Little, South Vancouver Island
Jennifer Ho, West Fraser Valley	Jason Salchert, Directly Chartered Locals and Small Separate Employer Units
Bob Jackson, REVP (was able to attend briefly)	

Staff:

Patrick Bragg, Political Communications Officer
Garry Fraser, Acting Regional Coordinator
Kristin Schnider, EA to the REVP-BC

The meeting commenced at 5:32 pm.

Jayne opened the meeting and advised that she would be chairing this meeting as Bob was not able to attend. Jayne went on to brief the Council that a female CBSA member at the Douglas Border Crossing had been shot and that Bob was at the site assisting members on behalf of the Union and the Component (as all CIU executive members are in Ottawa attending meetings).

Jayne then spoke on the behalf of all parties present on the call, expressing our prayers and thoughts for our Sister, her family and other members working alongside her.

I. Previous Minutes – September 6, 2012 Conference Call

Jayne reviewed action items stemming from the last conference call and concluded that all action items had been completed. Jayne and Tracy then expressed appreciation for format of minutes and the ease with which they can be reviewed.

Virginia Vaillancourt then put forward a motion to adopt minutes from the previous Regional Council conference call held September 6th, 2012 as circulated, which was seconded by Sam Wiese and carried.

II. "We Are All Affected" (WAAA) Campaign

a. National Day of Action – September 15, 2012

Jayne began the discussion by recognizing that every area had been able to participate in at least one activity on the National Day of Action.

Nic Humphreys commented that while a good job was done of organizing the events, member turnout was abysmal. Several Council members voiced their agreement with Nic's comment. Tracy Shudo suggested that the lack of attendance may have been due to poor communication of the events. She offered that she hadn't seen many postings about the event in her workplace. Sam Wiese countered that information was made available to members at worksites, on the PSAC-BC website, etc., and it was more a case of a lack of engagement by the members rather than a lack of communication.

Virginia Vaillancourt advised that she had heard that because of the job cuts members had lost faith and didn't necessarily want to come out despite the communication efforts to get them to the events.

Further discussion ensued. Nic concluded that this will serve as a lesson for the future: we will need to ensure member participation before we engage in similar activity to avoid this embarrassment for the PSAC again.

b. Occupation of Kits Coast Guard – September 14-15, 2012

Jayne then gave a brief summary of the 24 hour occupation of the Kitsilano Coast Guard base by Bob Jackson, Dave Clark, the BCFed Executive and other stakeholder groups. She noted that this activity received a lot of media and increased visibility of the issue. On behalf of the RC, Jayne then offered her thanks to those involved.

c. Next Steps – The Campaign Going Forward

Jayne conveyed that the next phase of the *We Are All Affected* campaign will begin in January 2013 with additional funding becoming available at that time. Presently, all WAAA funds have been exhausted following the National Day of Action.

As with the summer outreach campaign, Area Councils will be called upon again to submit funding proposals to access the new funds in January 2013. Jayne encouraged RC members to begin thinking about winter 2013 activities that could be opportunities for the WAAA campaign. Regardless, Jayne stressed that even though funds won't be available until January, the WAAA campaign is still ongoing and members shouldn't cease their political action.

ACTION ITEM:	All Regional Council members to begin identifying activities this winter for the continuation of the <i>We Are All Affected</i> campaign
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Clarification was sought as to when the activities needed to take place: just in the winter months or in the spring as well. Jayne advised that she would get clarification for the RC.

ACTION ITEM:	Jayne to seek clarification on the timeframe for which potential events for the next phase of the <i>We Are All Affected</i> campaign need to take place within – whether or not they are to take place in winter 2013 or spring 2013 as well
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Christine Walker commented that because Area Councils are responsible for their own event poster distribution and communication with limited funds, it would be helpful if PSAC National could cover the cost of advertising the WAAA events in local newspapers. Jayne invited Christine, along with all other Regional Council members, to submit their campaign suggestion to the REVP so that he can bring them before the AEC for discussion.

ACTION ITEM:	Christine to submit her suggestion regarding local advertising of campaign events to the REVP-BC so that it can be brought before the AEC All Regional Council members to send suggestions regarding the <i>We Are All Affected</i> campaign the REVP-BC Office so that they can be discussed by the AEC
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Sam Wiese then broached the subject of laid off members and access to EI. She advised that the Federal Government has decided that Section 51 of the Employment Insurance Act is not applicable to federal service employees who opt to be laid off (via alternation) as a result of the cutbacks. These members will be denied access to EI benefits under these circumstances and adjudicated as having voluntarily left their jobs. Sam asserted that PSAC Legal should be taking this matter on and constructing a mass appeal for members that are/will be facing this situation.

Christine Walker commented that she had not heard about this, but suggested that a factor at play may be the fact that some members are gaining monetarily through alternation, which would deny them EI benefits. Christine then asked if we have any past knowledge of what happened during the last round of mass job cuts in 1995. That information might be helpful.

After further discussion, Christine Walker, Sam Wiese and Jayne Johns agreed to work as an ad hoc committee of the RC with the task of reviewing the matter, drafting recommendations and reporting back to the RC at the next meeting.

ACTION ITEM:	Christine Walker, Sam Wiese and Jayne Johns to review EI entitlement and the Government's decision to deny application of Section 51 of the Act to members opting to be laid off (via alternation), provide recommendation(s) and report back to Regional Council at the November in-person meeting
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Virginia advised that she has a member dealing with this exact issue presently. Sam asked that she forward her the information on this situation so that she can assist.

ACTION ITEM:	Virginia to forward the details of the member facing this issue of EI entitlement to Sam Wiese for further action/discussion
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d. Oct. 9th XO from Robyn Benson regarding "Stephen Harper Hates Me" buttons – Discussion requested by Patt Holmes

Patt advised that she requested this item be included on the agenda because she wanted to ensure that all Regional Council members had read the letter that came out from President Robyn Benson regarding the potential of disciplinary action for wearing the "Stephen Harper Hates Me" buttons. Patt added that she didn't want any members to receive discipline for wearing the buttons at the workplace or posting images of them wearing the button in public space (e.g. Facebook). Patt advised that a number of pictures were taken on September 15 and posted with members wearing the button and they were aware of the risk this could pose to members. The pictures have since been removed.

Further discussion ensued regarding personal accounts on the display of the WAAA campaign materials and "Harper Hates Me" buttons. Patt also added that some of the Union posters and WAAA materials had begun to disappear from workstations and generally at her worksite. The party responsible for this removal has not been identified thus far.

III. Political Action Committee – Recommendation re: Defend Our Coast event – Oct. 22

Nic advised that the *Defend Our Coast* action had been discussed the night prior at the Victoria Area Council meeting. Nic noted that it had been a divisive issue: half of the members want to participate while the other half does not given the civil disobedience required. The concern was also voiced that there is the potential for this political action to turn from an environmental protest into an opportunity for certain parties to create trouble and violence.

Further discussion ensued.

Kristin then advised that this item was added to the meeting agenda because a request was received by the REVP Office from the event organizers for financial support of the action on Oct 22nd. This request was forwarded to the Political Action Committee to vet and draft a recommendation for the RC to consider. A limited response has been received from the Committee.

Patrick then provided some additional context with respect to the request received from the *Defend Our Coast* event organizers, advising that it was largely an environmental protest against the Enbridge Pipeline and the increased marine traffic on the BC coast. He added that the event on Oct. 22 has been endorsed by huge group of individuals and organizations including First Nations, Naomi Klein, Stephen Lewis, PSAC, BCGEU, and CAW. The intent of this action is to make a big statement about the environment through an act of civil disobedience similar to last year's protest in Washington, DC regarding the Keystone XL oil sands pipeline. This action on Oct. 22nd will coincide with solidarity activities at MLA offices on Oct. 24th. More information about both actions is available at www.defendourcoast.ca.

Following Nic's comments, Patrick stressed that the PSAC is not encouraging members to get arrested. Instead, the PSAC is encouraging members to show solidarity with these activities. When Bob spoke to Robyn about providing the PSAC's endorsement for this activity, they noted that it was in alignment with PSAC principles. In concert with the PSAC endorsement it was suggested that the Political Action Committee allocate \$1000 of their funds for a donation to this action.

Kristin provided that funding is available through the Political Action Committee line in the budget: the Committee had been allocated \$4000 for 2012 of which the entire amount remains.

On behalf of the Political Action Committee, Virginia Vaillancourt made a motion to donate \$1000 of Political Action Committee funds to the *Defend Our Coast* action on Oct. 22, 2012. The motion was then seconded by Heather DuDoward and Sam Wiese.

Further discussion then ensued with respect to how funding would be applied to the events related to *Defend Our Coast* and whether or not the donation should go exclusively to the action taking place at the Legislature or throughout the Region. Jayne then suggested that the motion to approve this recommendation stipulate a provision that the funding be distributed to the political activities throughout the Province.

While Nic expressed his support for this initiative and the aims of the event organizers, he cautioned the Regional Council that Labour and the PSAC may be regarded negatively by the public and/or media if we stand alongside parties at the Legislature that are simply there to cause trouble.

Further discussion then ensued. The motion was then carried with the understanding that the funds are to be distributed across the variety of activities being carried out on Oct. 22nd and 24th.

ACTION ITEM:	Kristin to issue the donations from the Political Action line in the budget as approved by the BC Regional Council to the <i>Defend Our Coast</i> activities on October 22 nd and 24 th
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Jayne then suggested that when Committees are tasked with submitting recommendations to the RC, they should set or be provided with a deadline for resolution so that discussion can be completed in advance of RC meetings via conference call or in person.

Bob then joined the call and provided an update on the injured member at the Douglas border crossing and the ongoing investigation.

IV. Lobbying MPs – Discussion Item from Virginia Vaillancourt

Before discussing the agenda item, Virginia conveyed her thoughts with the CBSA member shot and the member's family.

Virginia then went on to advise that this agenda item was born out of a discussion at the Victoria RWC AGM held in September. The committee discussed that lobbying efforts be conducted around issues identified by the RWC. Specific areas for lobbying include childcare, the Living Wage, pensions, the impact of job cuts on members, etc. At that meeting, Janelle Ho-Shing suggested that the BC Regional Council be asked to take on this activity using the WAAA funds. The Committee's hope is for a national action rather than a local one to facilitate a greater impact with MPs.

Jayne responded that the WAAA funding had been depleted for the current year, but that additional funds would be made available in January for the continuation of the campaign. Jayne suggested that Virginia submit a request to the REVP Office for funds to support this suggestion. As discussed earlier on this conference call, ideas such as these need to be submitted to the REVP with a budget, timeline and scope of activities that they can be included in the Region's submission to the AEC for funding.

Sam commented that she is in favour of lobbying MPs, particularly for these issues.

Virginia advised that the Committee was hoping to get a PSAC Regional Representative to assist the members with this lobbying. Jayne acknowledged that in the past the RC has received great support from the RO, but that the RC cannot dictate their work and will need to seek approval from the Regional Coordinator.

Garry advised that he could check on the availability of staff, but asked for clarification if Virginia was looking for staff support in Victoria specifically or across the whole Region. Virginia answered that acting regionally would have a greater impact.

Garry acknowledged that it is a great idea. However, given the limited budget and resources, he suggested that this lobbying start on the Island for now and to then build on this activity once the new cycle begins when we'll be in a better position to facilitate more broadly. Garry added that perhaps Dave Jackson could assist as a staff resource on the Island.

Jayne commented that the Victoria RWC should empower itself to do this and not to wait for regional/national participation. Once the RWC engages in this activity, it can serve as an example for other committees and PSAC bodies to emulate.

ACTION ITEM: Virginia to send a request to Garry Fraser and Bob Jackson to seek staff support from Dave Jackson for the purpose of MP lobbying in the Greater Victoria Area

Bob then had to leave the call to return to the situation at the Douglas Border Crossing.

V. Donations Sent & Recommendations

Tracy Shudo opened the donations discussion by speaking generally to the first five donations requests in the meeting agenda, those being:

1. Request from the OXFAM Canada for \$100
2. Request from Amnesty International for \$100
3. Request from Everywoman’s Health Centre for \$50 to initiate membership
4. Request from UFCW Local 247 for \$100 to sponsor their Light the Night Walk supporting the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada
5. Request from the United Way to purchase tickets to the “Labour Appreciation Night” fundraiser (\$50 per seat, recommendation to purchase a table of 10 for \$500)

Tracy advised that the Committee had discussed the requests and had been in favour of recommending all five for approval by the BC Regional Council, for a total amount of \$850. Tracy further noted that funds are available in the Donations line of the RC budget to cover this expense. She also added that with regard to the membership with Everywoman’s Health Centre, a committee member suggested that it might be a good idea to have a Council member or someone from the Mainland RWC get involved and participate in their meetings.

Martha Johnson then joined the call.

Sam Wiese then raised a concern with respect to the recommendation to fund the request from OXFAM Canada. Sam asserted that she would rather see RC funds go to an inner-city school lunch program or a local organization that addresses hunger and poverty rather than large international organization that has a lot of overhead costs. Heather DuDoward and Virginia Vaillancourt voiced their agreement with Sam’s position.

Tracy then commented on the process by which the Donations Committee assesses donations requests. She noted that the OXFAM Canada request forwarded to the Committee by the REVP Office did in fact meet the criteria for receiving a donation. Tracy added that she understood Sam’s preference to have donations funds go toward local activities, and confirmed that the RC had already donated funds to local activities/organizations throughout this year. Tracy then went on to say that the Donations Committee addresses the requests received by the REVP Office. The Committee does not solicit local organizations in need of funding.

Sam answered that in the past the RC has solicited local organizations to provide them with donations. Sam referenced the Bus Riders Union and the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre.

Further discussion ensued.

A request was then made to take a count of the RC members on the call for the purpose of concurrence. It was acknowledged that there were presently fifteen coordinators on the call.

On behalf of the Donations Committee, Tracy then made a motion that the five donations recommendations regarding Oxfam Canada, Amnesty International, UFCW Light the Night Walk supporting the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada, Everywoman’s Health Centre, and the United Way’s Labour Appreciation Night be approved. This motion was seconded by Antony Paller.

Sam Wiese requested that it be recorded that while she was in favour of the Donation Committee’s recommendations when motioned as a whole; she was not in favour of supporting OXFAM Canada. It is her view that instead of supporting large international organizations addressing issues of hunger and poverty, the Regional Council should support local groups working to eliminate these problems within our communities.

The motion was then carried.

ACTION ITEM:	Kristin to issue the donations as approved by the BC Regional Council to Oxfam Canada, Amnesty International, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada, Everywoman’s Health Centre and the United Way for ten (10) tickets to the Labour Appreciation Night
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f. BCFed Annual Labour Community Christmas Dinner Donation Request

As the Donations Committee did not have the proper time to vet this request from the BC Federation of Labour in advance of this conference call, it was agreed to table this Donation request for discussion at the November in-person meeting.

Heather concluded the donations discussion by suggesting that for the November in-person meeting perhaps there should be an agenda item to discuss whether or not the RC should support more local initiatives/charitable groups rather than large international ones. Jayne answered that Heather could put this suggestion forward when the call for agenda items is made.

VI. BC Federation of Labour Convention (Nov. 26th-30th) - Credentials Required and Unused

Jayne Johns reminded Council members attending the BCFed Convention to ensure they have their registrations submitted to the BCFed. For those members not attending, Jayne reminded them to please turn in their unused credentials to the REVP Office so that they can be redistributed.

Jayne advised that in her discussion with Bob he acknowledged that process surrounding Regulation 3 of the BC Regional Council By-Laws regarding BCFed Convention subsidies had recently been carried out and subsidies had been granted to applicants. To that end, subsidy recipients had already been contacted and advised.

Jayne went on to remind the Council that even if they are unable to attend the Convention for the entire week, they are encouraged to attend on the Thursday, November 29th for the election of the President and Secretary-Treasurer positions.

Jayne voiced her personal support and endorsement for Jim Sinclair as President of BCFed. Sam Wiese then echoed this endorsement, advising that the challenging party to the present Executive has been known to be unsupportive of FTE term employees seeking indeterminate status and the full rights of membership after a set period of years of service. She noted that the PSAC fought for this very issue.

Jayne added that the Unions backing the candidates challenging for the BCFed Executive – the Steelworkers and CUPE - are likely to have 60% of the delegates on the floor at Convention. As such it will not only be prudent upon PSAC delegates to attend Convention but also to engage these members on the floor and discuss the merits of the candidates up for election.

Nic asked if we knew how many PSAC members planned to attend the Convention as delegates. Jayne answered that we do not have this information presently.

Further discussion then ensued regarding Component funding of delegates.

Discussion then turned to the Convention resolutions. Patt Holmes asked if any resolutions had been forwarded regarding the job cuts and the Enbridge Pipeline. Sam advised that she will not see the Resolutions before Nov. 8th. However, Sam advised that we can anticipate resolutions on both issues, particularly from UCTE and the Coast Guard cuts, which could be expanded to general federal public service cuts.

VII. REVP Report & AEC Update

Given Bob Jackson's absence on the call, discussion of the REVP Report and AEC Update was tabled until the November in-person Regional Council meeting.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

a. PSAC Bargaining Teams – Discussion requested by Heather DuDoward

Heather DuDoward asked that this topic be included in Other Business so that she could canvass the Regional Council for suggestions on how to support bargaining teams.

As a former bargaining team member, Garry Fraser offered that a great motivator from members were emails received expressing supporting and assurances that the membership would do what it takes to secure a deal.

Sam Wiese added that what she had heard back from bargaining teams is that it's the personal gestures – note cards, emails, and words of thanks – that mean the most to them and that it doesn't necessarily need to be a purchased gift or item.

Tracy added that the at the Day of Action event in Vancouver a brick wall of comments was created for members to write messages about the job cuts on individual "bricks." Tracy commented that this concept of a "brick wall" for comments could be a good tool to assist members in voicing their support for bargaining teams, which could then be sent to the team.

Be concluded the conversation suggesting that in the past she has seen members contribute gift cards (e.g. Tim Hortons) to the Bargaining Team to show support.

Heather then thanked the Regional Council for their input and suggestions.

b. PSAC BC anti-bullying campaign – Discussion requested by Heather DuDoward

Heather advised that she had read somewhere that the PSAC BC Region was to come up with an anti-bullying campaign as a result of a decision at Convention. With that in mind, she requested an update on that initiative.

Sam confirmed that the issue had been raised at the Regional Convention. The first step in that initiative was addressed at the Regional Health & Safety Conference last spring where a whole package on anti-bullying was delivered. Sam added that subject had also been discussed between herself, her alternate and James Little. Sam then offered to add it to the agenda for the next BRUSH meeting scheduled for October 18th.

ACTION ITEM:	Sam to add the Regional anti-bullying campaign to the agenda for the next BRUSH meeting and report back to the Regional Council
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Heather asked what was being done nationally regarding anti-bullying. Patrick advised that earlier today Bob reported that the dates for the National Health & Safety conference have been set for April 2013 in Montreal and that one of the main components of that conference will be workplace violence and bullying. Patrick further suggested that he anticipates the PSAC will focus and develop materials on anti-bullying in a variety of fields in the coming cycle. The Region will be called upon to support these initiatives. Patrick stressed that anti-bullying is definitely a priority for the PSAC Nationally.

Patrick added that perhaps this item could be further discussed at the next in-person Regional Council meeting as Bob has a lot that he could add to this discussion. Heather agreed that this item should be brought forward for discussion at the November meeting.

c. CAW/CET Merger

Tracy advised that she had heard from a CAW member that CET and CAW have amalgamated. Jayne then clarified that CET and CAW had voted in favour of doing so, but that the actual merger will take a year or so to complete. Once complete, the new Union of CET and CAW members will amount to a membership of 330, 000 members.

Jayne then added that this type of issue is being examined at Labour College: if Unions are to stay strong they will need to entertain mergers and focus on core values. The Labour Movement is looking toward this end and will see what final structure(s) emerge.

d. Workforce Adjustments

Patt announced that with the ongoing workforce adjustments in her area, some of the worksites are being reduced to a single member. This will resurrect issues regarding members working alone. Patt added that the Citizenship Office closed permanently in Prince George, with the last member working there having been moved to integrity at the Service Canada office.

Susan Yaciw added that the front office counter at her worksite (UTE/CRA office) had closed effective October 1st. The other walk-in offices in the area that are still open are slated for closure in October 2013.

Be Gomes commented that a meeting had been held to discuss the new location and consolidation of offices at the new RCMP headquarters on the border of Vancouver/Burnaby. Some of the discussion also addressed the cuts to hours.

Jayne then asked, if any Regional Council members apart from herself were facing Workforce adjustments. Patt Holmes, Kelly Megyesi and Susan Yaciw were identified.

Martha then added that at an ADM conference call earlier that day there was an announcement regarding a forthcoming aggressive workforce reduction strategy, which would result in huge layoffs over the next few months along with nine office closures.

Martha then added a personal note that she will be leaving Veterans Affairs and taking a position with the PSAC at the Saskatoon Regional Office for a one-year term. This move will be effective November 13th, 2012.

The Regional Council members then congratulated Martha on her new position and wished her all the best going forward.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

After all other business items had been exhausted, Jayne motioned for the adjournment of the conference call. The motion was seconded by Tracy Shudo and carried. The meeting was concluded at 7:12 p.m.

Minutes recorded by: Kristin Schnider

Minutes published: Oct. 23, 2012